TO DIE FOR

by Buck Henry

Laura Ziskin Productions

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EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

START MAIN TITLES

Under blue skies, the wind blows across rolling snow covered fields. In the distance: a mid-size American town.

HOLD ON THIS. After a while: a hundred pair of running legs appear, men's legs, women's legs, in a pack, rushing across screen. We can get a glimpse of the equipment they're carrying: cameras, microphones, tape decks, rolls of cable. The legs cross the screen and disappear, leaving behind them the unobscured view of the snow covered fields and the town below.

DISSOLVE THROUGH TO: the town, nearer. Nothing moves.

DISSOLVE THROUGH TO: THE STONE'S HOUSE. There's a black ribbon fixed to the front door.

DISSOLVE THROUGH TO: THE MARETTO SENIOR'S HOUSE. A black wreath leans against the front door.

DISSOLVE THROUGH TO: THE MERTZ HOUSE.

DISSOLVE THROUGH TO: THE EMMETT HOUSE.

DISSOLVE THROUGH TO: SUZANNE AND LARRY'S HOUSE (yellow police CRIME SCENE tape crosses the door). MOVE across the yard and up through a second floor window into the bedroom and out onto the landing and down the stairs to the ground floor, slowing to SEE a section of carpet near the front door that is a different color from the rest of the carpet, lighter, as though that section has been scrubbed again and again. LOOK AT IT and BACK AWAY and out the front door to the yard and TILT UP at the blue sky and:

END MAIN TITLES

DISSOLVE THROUGH TO:

EXT. LAKE - DAY

The lake is covered with ice. MOVE FAST across the surface for some distance until we see a body under the ice -- a young woman, frozen stiff, her mittened hands pressing against the underside of the ice, her open dead eyes staring up as though peering into a mirror. The warp of the ice distorts her features. Snow falls onto the ice. MOVE IN toward her face until the image dissolves into black and white dots.

SUZANNE'S VOICE
Here's what I've found out. That all of life is a learning experience. That everything is part of a big master plan. But sometimes it's hard to - hard to read. I mean - it's like - if you get too close to the screen, all you can see is a bunch of little black-and-white dots. You don't see the big picture until you stand back. But when you do, it all makes sense. Everything comes into focus.

The black and white dots reform into an image on a tv screen --

INT. A ROOM (IN SUZANNE AND LARRY) HOUSE - DAY

-- the image of SUZANNE STONE, twenty six years old. Her blonde hair is pulled back and tied with a black bow. She sits in a chair. She looks straight at us. She speaks with a rehearsed ease; friendly, self-contained, eager to please, proud of her ingenuity, certain of her originality.

SUZANNE
My name is Suzanne Maretto. No. Wait. I'm sorry. Suzanne Maretto is my married name. My own name is Suzanne Stone. That's my professional name. Suzanne Stone.
(pause)
It's not like I have any negative feelings about the name Maretto.

EXT. A RESTAURANT - NIGHT - CLOSE ON NEON SIGN

The sign, scripted in neon: "MARETTO'S". It's raining.

INT. A ROOM - SUZANNE - AS BEFORE

SUZANNE
I can assure you and every individual who knows me can assure you that I'm just not that kind of person. Maretto is the name after all of my husband who I loved very very much and also of course of his parents Mr. and Mrs. Maretto --

INT. TV STUDIO STAGE

JOE and ANGELA MARETTO sit in chairs, under harsh tv lights, staring, serious, somewhat self-conscious, at the camera.

INT. A ROOM - SUZANNE - AS BEFORE

SUZANNE
-- and of his lovely and talented sister, Janice Maretto --

INT. INDOOR SKATING RINK - DAY

JANICE MARETTO, late twenties, skates into camera, spraying ice.

INT. A ROOM -SUZANNE - AS BEFORE

SUZANNE
-- who have been like a second mother and father to me and who I regard as I do my own family --

INT. TV STUDIO STAGE

PAN from the MARETTO'S to EARL STONE, CAROL STONE, Suzanne's mother and father, and FAYE STONE, Suzanne's sister, four years older. They sit in chairs, like the Maretto's, waiting.

INT. A ROOM - SUZANNE - AS BEFORE

SUZANNE
-- particularly since my recent tragedy and who just through knowing and being related to them have given me what I think is a very precious and valuable insight into the different kinds of ethnic relationships that are part of the very things that I've been trying to explore as a member of the professional media.

EXT. MARETTO'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Suzanne and several friends run through the rain, the girls holding their raincoats over their heads, and enter the restaurant.

INT. MARETTO'S - LARRY MARETTO

LARRY MARETTO, 24 years old, handsome, good-natured, stands behind the bar, drawing a pitcher of beer from a tap.

On the tv screen above the bar Larry King interviews a a tedious celebrity. On the wall are framed photographs of Frank Sinatra, Joe DiMaggio and Pope John Paul II. The jukebox plays.

Larry looks at the door as Suzanne and her friends enter. He

watches Suzanne pull her raincoat from over her head and shake out her hair. She follows her friends to a booth. She knows he's watching. She catches his eye and looks away. Janice Maretto brings an order from the kitchen and sees Larry looking at Suzanne. She laughs as the beer overflows the pitcher. He looks at her and grins self-consciously.

INT. SKATING RINK - JANICE - AS BEFORE

JANICE
First impressions? In one word? You really want to know? Four letters. Begins with "C".
(pause - a look)
Cold. C-o-l-d. Hah!

INT. MERTZ HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

LYDIA MERTZ, sixteen, overweight, a mess, stands and talks to the camera. Her mother, VALERIE MERTZ, a clear indication of what Lydia will be in twenty years, sits in the b.g., watching a tv soap opera, looking over now and then at Lydia, scornfully.

LYDIA
I thought she was like a goddess of some kind. Like -- like Lady Di before she dumped the Prince and went nudist and everything, I mean. Suzanne bought me this dress which I hope to fit some day.

Valerie Mertz snorts derisively. Lydia moves out to the porch.

EXT. MERTZ PORCH - DAY

LYDIA
Suzanne Maretto is a beautiful human being with real dreams and as - asper - asperitions.

INT. WHITE ROOM - DAY - JIMMY EMMETT

JIMMY EMMETT, sixteen, dressed in white, cloth belted, short sleeved prison coveralls, sits behind a table.

JIMMY
Mrs. Maretto? She gave me something that lasted - I swear this is true - that lasted for a whole year - and that was a boner.
(pause; he looks off-camera)
Can I say that? Oh. Can I say hardon?

INT. A ROOM - SUZANNE - AS BEFORE

SUZANNE
The point is that - for instance - Connie Chung who is married I believe to Maury Povitch, the well-known interviewer, doesn't say hello this is Connie Povitch with the news, does she, and I don't think that she would be embarrassed by it or anything like that because she's already pretty ethnic when you think about it, or - to take another example of someone who doesn't appear to have an ethnic bone in her body - there's Jane Pauley who I strongly relate to because of our similar physical types although I thankfully don't have to struggle with a weight problem like she does - and she also to the best of my knowledge has never identified herself audience-wise as Jane Trudeau even though her husband - Mr. Trudeau - is a prominent cartoonist of some kind and not as so many people believe the ex-President of Canada.
(pause; she drinks some water)
What I'm saying is this: that there are some people who never know who they are or who they want to be until it's too late. And that's a real tragedy in my book. I have to say for instance that my husband Larry was one of those people and I don't mean that as a putdown of any sort...

INT. CLUB - NIGHT

A ratty little place, crowded with young people dancing, Suzanne among them. On the small stage is a rock combo. Larry plays drums. The music is loud and bad. Larry sees Suzanne dancing. She looks at the stage and smiles and waves.

INT. SKATING RINK - DAY - JANICE - AS BEFORE

JANICE
I always say what I think. It runs in the family. We're Italian. So when Larry started playing in his dumb rock group and he asked me what I thought I said "well,

JANICE (CONT)
frankly, I think you all suck" and he laughed because he knew it was said out of love. I mean I just didn't want my little brother wasting his time. he wasn't the kind of guy who did - you know - frivolous things. So when he says to me:

INT. JANICE'S CAR - DAY - (MOVING)

Janice drives, Larry next to him. They drive slowly by a store in front of which Suzanne hands out perfume samples to passersby.

LARRY
I'm going to marry her.

JANICE
You're what?

INT. SKATING RINK - JANICE - AS BEFORE

JANICE
-- I said. And he says:

INT. CAR

LARRY
I'm telling you, Sis -- she's the golden girl of my dreams.

INT. SKATING RINK - JANICE - AS BEFORE

JANICE
And I did one of these -

She puts her finger in her mouth in a gagging gesture.

JANICE
- which I regretted right away because he looked at me with that doggy look that guys get -

INT. CAR

Larry turns and looks at Janice.

JANICE
Oh Jesus, Lar...I was just kidding.

She touches him, apologetically. They stare out the window.

LARRY
She's like a delicate china doll, isn't she?

JANICE
Sure.

LARRY
Like one of those porceline figurines.

JANICE
Yeah. That too.

Suzanne hands out samples. Her blonde hair glows in the sun.

INT. SKATING RINK - JANICE - AS BEFORE

JANICE
Because that's what you do, right? If someone you love says well I think I'd like a dish of mud for dinner, you say OK, fried or sauteed? So when she - Suzanne - says to me -

EXT. OUTDOOR RESTAURANT - DAY

Suzanne, Janice and Larry sit at an outdoor table.

SUZANNE
Larry certainly failed to tell me how pretty you were.

INT. SKATING RINK - JANICE - AS BEFORE

JANICE
- I then failed to say: cut the bullshit, OK? I mean - I know what I look like which is perfectly all right for a small town chick with good legs - that's from all the skating. Anyway - then she says:

EXT.OUTDOOR RESTAURANT - DAY

SUZANNE
Of course if you're actively seeking a career in the professional ice-skating field - in the spotlight, so to speak - I think you have to maximize your positive features.

JANICE
Oh sure.

SUZANNE
So many of our top public figures are not ashamed to utilize the accomplishments of modern medicine in the search for self-improvement.

INT. SKATING RINK - JANICE - AS BEFORE

JANICE
I knew where she was going.

EXT. OUTDOOR RESTAURANT - DAY

SUZANNE
A good example is what for instance Cher Bono has done in turning what is basically a sow's ear - I believe the expression goes - into a silk purse. Of course she had good basic features to start with very much like you do and wonderful posture which is very important. So what I'm saying is that a qualified plastic surgeon could just snip away those little beauty spots or facial blemishes whatever you call them and you'd see how much better you'd feel about yourself.

LARRY
She's a nut for self-improvement, aren't you?

JANICE
Oh yeah -- I can see that.

SUZANNE
I certainly hope I haven't been too personal. It's just -

JANICE
- oh no - no no - fuck no -

Larry gives her a look.

SUZANNE
You know what I believe?

JANICE
What would that be?

SUZANNE
I believe that Mr. Gorbachev - you know - the man who ran Russia for so long - would still be in power today if he'd done what so many people suggested and had that big purple thing taken off his forehead. I firmly believe that. Some day I hope to interview him and we would talk about that among other more pertinent international things.

LARRY
Suzanne's going to be the next Barbara Walters.

JANICE
Is that right?

SUZANNE
Well -- Barbara has many admirable qualities that I would hope to emulate. A wide range of knowledge about current events. And a deep sympathy for people's inner feelings which is a trait so many people have who are of the Jewish persuasion.

LARRY
Isn't she something?

She pats his hand and smiles at him.

SUZANNE
You know what we're going to do? We're going to get you a nice haircut so we can see those pretty brown eyes.

She reaches up and slowly brushes his hair off his forehead.

<u>INT. SKATING RINK - JANICE - AS BEFORE</u>

JANICE
And that was that. Finito. Done deal. He was a goner. Sure I could have said some things. Well, to tell you the truth, I did say some things. But I mean in a subtle way.

INT. MARETTO (SENIOR) HOUSE BREAKFAST ROOM - DAY

Larry, Janice, Joe and Angela are at the breakfast table. Larry pushes his chair back, throws his napkin down and exits. SOUND of the FRONT DOOR SLAMMING. Angela gets up and looks through the window. Outside, Larry goes to his motorcycle and roars off. Joe and Angela look at Janice.

JANICE
Jesus! What's the big deal? What did I say?

JOE
Well your brother said how pretty this girl was and you said: yeah, right, real pretty for a suicide blonde.

JANICE
Oh did I say that?

ANGELA
What's that supposed to mean -- suicide blonde?

JANICE
Dyed by her own hand. Get it? It's just a joke. Where's the sense of humor around here?

EXT. LARRY ON HIS BIKE - DAY - (MOVING)

Larry drives into a mall and pulls up outside a jewelry store. He stares at the store window, full of glittering rings.

INT. SKATING RINK - JANICE - AS BEFORE

JANICE
Because I just didn't get it. I mean all the girls around town thought Larry was really cute. They all had a thing for him and they used to come in the restaurant just to -- you know --

INT. MARETTO'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT - SERIES OF SHOTS

FIRST PRETTY GIRL walks by the bar, smiles at Larry.

FIRST GIRL
Hi, Larry.

SECOND PRETTY GIRL at a table winks at him over her drink.

SECOND GIRL
How's it going, Larry.

THIRD PRETTY GIRL, accompanied by cleavage, leans over the bar.

THIRD GIRL
Hey, Larry --

INT. SKATING RINK - JANICE - AS BEFORE

JANICE
Nothing. NOTHING!

INT. MARETTO'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Joe Maretto closes out the register. Larry and Janice sit at a table, having a cup of coffee.

JANICE
Angela Raguzzo is crazy about you.

LARRY
Oh yeah?

JANICE
She wants you to take her out.

LARRY
She's very nice but she's too tall.

JANICE
She's hot stuff.

LARRY
I'll bet.

JANICE
So's Dana DeCarlo.

LARRY
Oh swell. You want me to go out with a gangster's daughter.

JANICE
Who said he's a gangster?

LARRY
Everybody.

JANICE
Don't you want a little excitement?

LARRY
I got all the excitement I can take.

JANICE
Who? The ice maiden?

LARRY
You don't know what you're talking about.

JANICE
Yeah? Inform me.

LARRY
Well it's none of your business, Sis, but let me tell you something. Suzanne is very delicate looking -- very fragile -- you know -- but --

JANICE
But what.

LARRY
She's like a volcano.

JANICE
A volcano? You mean people come from miles around to watch her explode? Huh?

She laughs and gives him a little kick. He smiles at her.

LARRY
Hey really - I'm serious. Sometimes I - I don't know -

INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Larry and Suzanne in a back row. His arm is over her shoulder. She eats popcorn, delicately, one kernel at a time, from a box in his lap. Without taking her eyes from the screen, she takes his hand from around her shoulder and puts it on her leg and slides it up her thigh. His eyes are glazed.

INT. A ROOM - SUZANNE - AS BEFORE

SUZANNE
It's just that Larry didn't have any great ambition until we were together and I showed him that there were more things to life than mixing drinks and serving up

SUZANNE (CONT)
mustacciolis which is a kind of pasta that the Italians eat -- and it's delicious although to be honest my own taste in foods runs more to the nouvelle cuisine-type things that are so popular nowadays with people who are in the know -- the kinds of things that I can imagine someone as active and health conscious as Cindy Crawford fixing up for herself and her husband Richard Gere and perhaps a few of their equally attractive friends -- but the point is that my plan for Larry and me once my own career was finalized so to speak was for us to open a restaurant that would have a meaningful ambiance -- a theme -- like those places owned by important celebrities such as Bruce Willis and Arnold Schwartznegger who - let's face it - is living out the American Dream -- not to mention I suppose the Swiss or Austrian Dream or whatever he is -- but in our case the theme would be from my own profession like with big black and white photographs of people like Ted Koppel and Phil Donahue - the kind of individuals that everybody looks up to on the walls --

INT. LARRY'S CAR - NIGHT

They're parked on the street near Suzanne's parents house. They finish a long kiss. Suzanne opens her blouse, takes Larry's hand and puts it inside. He begins kissing her breasts.

LARRY
(muffled, kissing)
Suze -- oh Suze --

Suzanne stares out over his heaving shoulder.

INT. A ROOM - SUZANNE - AS BEFORE

SUZANNE
-- and the main dining room could be designed like a big studio with tv cameras and monitors placed around so everybody could see each other and it would be a real event

SUZANNE (CONT)
and not just a meal, if you see what I mean, and upstairs there would be actual working tv studios where I and others could do our broadcasts --

EXT. FIELD - DAY

By a tree, Larry and Suzanne on a blanket. The blanket is placed so that we can't see exactly what her hand is doing under the blanket. Larry throws his head back.

LARRY
Oh yes, Suze, my pretty Suzanne, oh yeah...

Suzanne's hand keeps moving as she stares into the distance.

INT. A ROOM - SUZANNE - AS BEFORE

SUZANNE
- a kind of center in other words where you could feed the mind and the body like Robert DeNiro the actor who also by the way is Italian has in New York -- and my idea which I think was really clever and catchy was to call the place Channel Eight. Eight. See? Ate. A-T-E. Like a play on words --

INT. STONE HOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Late at night. Larry is on top of Suzanne, moving, breathing heavily. The game show, JEOPARDY, is on the tv set across the room, the sound low. Suzanne watches the screen over Larry's shoulder.

LARRY
Oh Suze -- my beautiful Susie --

On tv, the MC asks a question. The Contestand ponders.

LARRY
Sue Sue Sue....

SUZANNE
(giving the answer)
Who is Steven Spielberg.

Larry raises his head and looks at her.

LARRY
What?

Suzanne looks at him and smiles.

SUZANNE
What?

INT. A ROOM - SUZANNE - AS BEFORE

SUZANNE
Anyway -- my point was that I always knew who I was. And who I wanted to be. Always.

INT. STONE LIVING ROOM - DAY - TWENTY YEARS EARLIER

On a tv screen -- the image of six year old Suzanne, dressed like a little doll, every hair in place, seen through the lens of a videocamera of an early vintage. Suzanne stares at the camera with a solemn intensity. The videocam swings around, revealing the living room of the Stone's house; her sister, ten year old Faye; their mother, Carol, cheerfully hiding from the camera by covering her face; and, in a wall mirror, the reflection of the videocam's operator, their father, Earl, who grins and waves at his own image. The camera swings around and the focus shifts as Earl aims it at their console television set, connected to the videocam by a cable, and now on the tv screen and Suzanne kneeling by it, looking at the screen. As the videocam moves toward the tv set, Suzanne looks back at the lens of the videocam, then back at the screen, back at the lens, back at the screen, as though trying to see what her face looks like on the screen. But she can't. All she can see on the screen is the back of her head. She reaches out toward the image of the back of her head on the screen as the videocam moves in close.

INT. TV STUDIO STAGE - EARL STONE, CAROL STONE, FAYE STONE

EARL STONE
Faye was just four when we came back from the hospital with Suzie and Faye said "she looks like a little doll". And that's what she was. She was my little doll. My little Princess. My perfect little lady. Every night she'd climb into my lap and we'd watch tv together. And she'd say: "that's Mrs. Partridge", she'd say: "it's Mister Magoo" or she'd say "look, Daddy, that's Yoko Ono". She knew everyone's name. It was --
(he chokes up)

CAROL
And she worked so hard at school.

EARL
Yes. So hard. She couldn't accept even a B plus. It had to be A's. I said honey, just do your best.

CAROL
When she wanted to become a drum majorette in the school band --

EARL
You should have seen her.

INT./EXT. STONE HOUSE - DAY

Earl and Carol watch from the kitchen. Suzanne, eight years old, in the back yard, practices with a baton, throwing it into the air over and over. She misses it. Throws again. It bounces. Again. It hits her. She throws again. And again.

INT. TV STUDIO STAGE - THE STONES - AS BEFORE

EARL STONE
I only saw her cry two times. I mean <u>really</u> cry. Imagine that. Two times. Once at Christmas when Carol's mother -- the kids' grandmother -- gave them -- oh this was very -- uncharacteristic --

INT. STONE HOUSE - DAY

Six year old Suzanne looks over as her GRANDMOTHER places an antique gold locket on a gold chain around ten year old Faye's neck. Suzanne stares at the locket. Faye covers it with her hand. Suzanne's eyes fill with tears.

INT. TV STUDIO STAGE - THE STONES - AS BEFORE

EARL STONE
She just -- I think -- responded to the beauty of it, you know. It was a sort of family heirloom and we couldn't get another just like it for her. But it didn't really matter because Faye misplaced it a year or so later and we never saw it again. So. What was I saying? Oh yes. The other time she cried. I mean really wept. It was when Grace Kelly died.

INT. STONE HOUSE - SUZANNE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Suzanne, thirteen years old, sits on her bed, watching the funeral on television. She is weeping.

INT. TV STUDIO STAGE - THE STONES - AS BEFORE

CAROL STONE
It was like she'd lost a member of her own family. She cried for three days.

EARL STONE
She was just so -- sensitive. Isn't that right, Faye?

INT. STONE HOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Suzanne, twenty-five, watches a late night talk show. Faye is reading. Carol Stone, dressed for bed, appears on the stairs.

CAROL
Don't stay up all night, girls.

FAYE
We won't, mom.

Carol goes up the stairs, reappears a few moments later.

CAROL
And don't forget to turn everything off, OK?

FAYE
We won't, mom.

Faye goes up the stairs again. SOUND of a DOOR SHUTTING. Suzanne shakes her head.

SUZANNE
Jesus Christ.

FAYE
Shhh.

SUZANNE
This is making me crazy. It's like being back in high school.

FAYE
It's temporary. I'll get my own apartment again when I get another job.

SUZANNE
I don't want to be fifty years old and living with my parents like some dumb loony old maid. I want my own life.

INT. TV STUDIO - THE STONES - AS BEFORE

FAYE
She was -- super sensitive.

EXT. SHOPPING MALL - DAY

Suzanne is handing out samples. Larry comes toward her, holding a paper bag. He puts it in her hand and goes.

SUZANNE
What is it?

She takes out a box and a card. She opens the box, revealing a diamond ring. She raises the card and reads it.

Written on the card: FOR SUZANNE -- I'D DIE FOR YOUR LOVE.

INT. CHURCH - DAY - A PRIEST

VERY FAST. A Priest, bible in hand, stands behind a casket.

FAST MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

Same Priest, bible in hand, smiling. ORGAN MUSIC. PULL BACK to REVEAL Suzanne and Larry exchanging wedding rings.

INT. SKATING RINK - JANICE - AS BEFORE

JANICE
Larry was so proud because he said Suzanne designed their wedding rings herself. Want me to describe them? Round and gold. Big fucking deal. Oh well.

INT. CHURCH

Larry lifts Suzanne's veil, slowly, to kiss her.

INT. TV STUDIO STAGE - THE STONES - AS BEFORE

FAYE
The veil Suzanne wore she had copied from a picture in a magazine of the actual one Maria Shriver wore at her wedding.

CAROL STONE
And she looked so pretty -- Suzanne, I mean. So beautiful.

INT. CHURCH

And she does look beautiful, as the kiss ends.

PRIEST
Ladies and gentlemen -- may I introduce to you Mr. and Mrs. Larry Maretto.

The guests applaud. Carol Stone is crying. So is Joe Maretto.

INT. TV STUDIO STAGE - THE MARETTOS - AS BEFORE

JOE MARETTO
I thought he would marry - you know - a nice Italian girl but - like the guy in The Godfather says: this is America. OK? The melting pot. I don't have the prejudices my father had. He would turn in his grave if he knew for instance that we had a President of the United States who was divorced and who I voted for myself. The rules change all the time. I saw on tv about this guy who had a wife and kids and he died and they found out he was a woman all along. Is that possible? Look around. I hear Michael Jackson is dating Brooke Shields. See what I mean? Only in America.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

The wedding party is on the church steps. A photographer takes a picture. Larry and Suzanne move toward a limousine. Suzanne suddenly turns and runs back up the steps and embraces her father and leans up to whisper in his ear.

SUZANNE
I'll still never find a guy like you, Dad.

EARL STONE
What?

But she's gone, running back down the steps. He looks after her, a slightly confused smile on his face.

INT. TV STUDIO STAGE - THE STONES - AS BEFORE

CAROL STONE
We got a postcard from Suzanne every day they were on their honeymoon. It surprised us that they went to Florida because she never was one for lying around the beach but Larry was very much into swimming and fishing and all those things and I guess she just wanted to make him happy.

EXT. FLORIDA RESORT HOTEL - DAY

A charter fishing boat leaves from the wharf. Larry and several other men, holding their fishing gear, are on board. Suzanne stands on the dock, wearing a long-sleeved white dress, a wide white picture hat tied with a scarf, and dark glasses. Larry smiles and waves at Suzanne as the boat leaves.

INT. ROYALE HOTEL - DAY

A few minutes later. The lobby is crowded. A banner proclaims: NATIONAL MEDIA CONFERENCE. Suzanne walks through the lobby, stops at the Conference credential desk and looks at a schedule.

Suzanne walks by the conference rooms. Printed signs indicate the theme of each room's seminar: WHO MAKES THE NEWS; NETWORKING AT THE NETWORK; FAME VS. REPUTATION; etc. A BURST of AUDIENCE LAUGHTER comes from one of the rooms. Suzanne steps inside.

INT. HOTEL CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

The room is filled with people, listening to HAL BRADY, a fifty-ish well-groomed executive type, seated on a small stage.

HAL BRADY
So when all is said and done I think we have to remember that here and now, in our fast-moving computer age, it is the medium of television that joins together the global community, and it is the -

Suzanne moves against the wall and takes off her hat. The light catches her hair. Hal Brady pauses mid-sentence as he sees her.

HAL BRADY
- it is the television journalist who serves as messenger, bringing the world into our homes and our homes into the world. Thank you.

The audience applauds. Hal Brady stares down at Suzanne.

EXT. MERTZ PORCH - DAY - LYDIA - AS BEFORE

LYDIA
Suzanne said that you had to make every day count which is why I'm reading this book she gave me on vocabulary and weight loss - "Speak More and Eat Less". She said to me once: "opportunity is always knocking but if you aren't listening its knuckles get sore and it moves to another house". Something like that. She told me that even on her honeymoon she got Larry to take her to some hotel in Florida where there was going to be this kind of convention of all these big-shot tv people that she read about in a magazine. Which of course she didn't tell Larry because she didn't want to maybe hurt his feelings about her tending to her career while they were bonding sexually so to speak.

INT. ROYALE HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Larry is in bed asleep. The clock on the night table reads 12:15.

INT. ROYALE HOTEL BAR/NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Filled with Conference attenders. Seated in a booth are Suzanne, Hal Brady, a SEXY LOOKING WOMAN and a WEASELLY LOOKING GUY. Suzanne has a ladies' drink with a straw sticking out of it. She's dressed in her sexiest resort outfit.

BRADY
The point is, Miss --

SUZANNE
(slight hesitation)
Stone.

BRADY
Miss Stone --

SUZANNE
Suzanne.

He looks at her with a knowing smile and a nod.

BRADY
Suzanne Stone? That's a good name. That's a name you can remember. The point is, Suzanne, if you want it bad enough, you'll get it. But you've got to really want it. You've got to be able to do things that ordinary people wouldn't do. You see what I'm saying?

SUZANNE
I think so.

BRADY
I'll tell you a story. You got time for a story?

Brady puts his hand on her leg.

SUZANNE
Oh yes.

BRADY
What about another of those?

SUZANNE
Oh I don't -

BRADY
Sweetheart -- give us another all around, OK? Anyway -- when I was at the network there was this gal from some ten watt station in the south where she did the weather. The weather! I mean she wasn't the brightest bulb on the Christmas tree but she was ambitious and she had a pleasant speaking voice and a degree in journalism from some hick college somewhere -

WEASELLY GUY
I know who that is.

BRADY
Yeah, you do. So she comes up to New York in her best Donna Karan dress-for-success knockoff, blonde hair all done up in a French Twist and an audition tape in her imitation leather briefcase along with a letter of introduction from her station manager to some lower echelon guy in public affairs. But

BRADY (CONT)
instead she wangles her way into the office of the President of the news division - who told me this story himself - and she gives him the letter ostensibly meant for the other guy. Are you with me so far?

SUZANNE
Oh yes.

Brady uses his cocktail napkin as a prop for the letter.

BRADY
And he tears it open and reads it and it says: please give your most serious consideration to the bearer of this letter - Miss so-and-so - who is of moderate intelligence, who has had some experience in broadcasting and, more importantly, who can suck your cock till your eyes pop out.

Brady barks a laugh. The weaselly guy and the sexy looking woman laugh. Suzanne, trying not to look shocked, joins their laughter.

SEXY WOMAN
Well -- ?

BRADY
Well what?

SEXY WOMAN
Well did she?

BRADY
Did she? Oh <u>did</u> she. And you know who that gal is today?

SUZANNE
Who?

Brady leans over and whispers a name in her ear.

SUZANNE
Is that true?

WEASELLY MAN
Oh is it true.

BRADY
And here comes the best part.

SUZANNE
Yes?

WEASELLY MAN
This <u>is</u> the best part.

BRADY
About ten years ago I'm at some conference somewhere in the south and I run into that station manager and I congratulate him on his letter writing skills. And -- he doesn't - know - what - I'm - talking - about.

SUZANNE
Why doesn't he?

BRADY
Because, sweetheart -- he didn't write the letter.

He grins at Suzanne. She doesn't quite get it.

SUZANNE
Who <u>did</u>?

BRADY
<u>She</u> did. She wrote it herself.

SUZANNE
Oh. I see.

BRADY
It's good, isn't it?

WEASELLY MAN
I love it.

SUZANNE
I watch her show all the time.

WEASELLY MAN
Everybody does.

BRADY
And she's got a shelf full of Emmys and Peabodys to prove it.

WEASELLY MAN
And a TVQ up there with Cosby and Roseanne.

SEXY WOMAN
And a very rich husband.

WEASELLY MAN
Whose eyes are out to here!

They all laugh hysterically as the waitress brings them another round of drinks. After they collect themselves:

BRADY
So what do you think, Suzanne?

His hand is on her leg again.

SUZANNE
What do I think about what?

BRADY
Well....

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Larry, in bed alone, opens his eyes at a sound at the door.

LARRY
Suze?

He looks at the bedside clock. It says: 1:45. He looks around.

LARRY
Suzanne?

Suzanne stands with her back against the hall door. She is out of breath. Her eyes shine. Her voice is husky as she says:

SUZANNE
Hi, honey.

LARRY
What happened? Where were you?

She moves toward the foot of the bed.

SUZANNE
I couldn't sleep.

LARRY
Where'd you go?

SUZANNE
Did you miss me?

She drops her jacket to the floor. Larry stares at her.

LARRY
Where were you?

She slowly takes her top off and leans toward him.

SUZANNE
Did you dream about me, baby?

LARRY
Hey, Suze...?

As she crawls across the bed toward him.

INT. TV STUDIO STAGE - STONES AND MARETTOS - AS BEFORE

EARL STONE
They must have had a really -- successful honeymoon because when they came back they were --

CAROL STONE
Radiant.

EARL
Exactly. Radiant.

JOE MARETTO
Larry sold his bike and his drums and took the money he'd been saving up in case he decided to go back to college and put a down payment on the condo over in the Heights...

EXT. (SUZANNE AND LARRY) MARETTO'S HOUSE - DAY

A brand new house in a recently built development.

INT. TV STUDIO STAGE - STONES AND MARETTOS - AS BEFORE

CAROL STONE
Suzanne did a beautiful job of fixing it up. She wanted it to be - how did she put it? A reflection of two young aggressive achievers on their way up the professional ladder...

EXT. (SUZANNE AND LARRY) MARETTO'S HOUSE - DAY

The paint job on the house changes to another color, flowers and plants appear in the front yard, curtains appear in the windows.

INT. TV STUDIO STAGE - STONES AND MARETTOS - AS BEFORE

JOE MARETTO
And he bought her that new Datsun.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Suzanne speeds along in her new Datsun, the radio blasting.

INT. TV STUDIO STAGE - STONES AND MARETTO'S - AS BEFORE

ANGELA MARETTO
And the dog. Don't forget the dog.

INT. (SUZANNE AND LARRY) MARETTO'S HOUSE - DAY

Suzanne, barefoot, watches a workman finish laying the carpet in the front hall as the front door opens and Larry appears.

SUZANNE
WAIT! WAIT! DON'T WALK IN HERE IN THOSE SHOES!

LARRY
Oh.

He stands on the doorstep, grinning.

SUZANNE
What is it?

He turns to one side. The head of a tiny dog looks out of his jacket pocket. It yaps. Larry takes the dog from his pocket. It wriggles out of his hands, yapping. Suzanne falls to her knees with a cry of ecstatic delight.

SUZANNE
Oh yes yes yes yes little pretty thing oh yes aren't you the most precious little person in the whole wide world...

And the creature spins with excitement and takes a leak on the new carpet. She laughs and claps her hands.

INT. MERTZ HOUSE - LYDIA - AS BEFORE

LYDIA
She named it Walter after Walter - is it Cronkite - ? - the guy who used to be on tv. I think he was Dan Rather's uncle or something.

INT. WHITE ROOM - JIMMY - AS BEFORE

JIMMY
Walter? The dog. Do I remember Walter? Oh yeah.

INT. (SUZANNE AND LARRY) MARETTO'S HOUSE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Light from a lamp that's fallen onto the floor illuminates Larry's face as he looks up to the top of the stairs where Walter, the dog, stands, yapping. SOUND OF A STRUGGLE and someone's furious whisper: NOW, NOW, ASSHOLE, NOW!

INT. TV STUDIO STAGE - STONES AND MERETTOS - AS BEFORE

FAYE STONE
Suzanne just adored that dog.

ANGELA MARETTO
Oh yes. She loved that dog.

EARL STONE
It was a cute little thing, wasn't it?

FAYE STONE
Oh yes. It was darling.

INT. SKATING RINK - JANICE - AS BEFORE

JANICE
It was a hair-ball puked up by some demon from hell.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Suzanne drives the Datsun. Walter's tiny head sticks out of the window, yapping.

INT. TV STATION (WGSL) - DAY - ED GRANT

ED GRANT, middle-aged, sits on the edge of his desk. Behind a window is a tiny broadcasting studio in which Grant's assistant, GEORGE, fiddles with some equipment. Over Ed Grant's shoulder is a tv monitor. On its screen is a freeze frame of Suzanne's face.

ED GRANT
When I put the sign out for a Gal Friday, I figured on interviewing a couple of high-school drop-outs who wouldn't mind running over to the mall for doughnuts and emptying the ashtrays, that kind of thing. And

ED GRANT (CONT)
that's the first time we meet Gangbusters -- that's what George and I called Suzanne, not to her face, of course -- she's standing out there - right outside that window - gearing up for battle...

ANGLE THROUGH WGSL FRONT WINDOW - DAY

Another day. Suzanne is outside, dressed in a Donna Karan suit, carrying a new imitation leather briefcase. Her hair is done up in a French Twist. She seems to be talking to herself. She straightens her skirt, enters, moves to Ed Garnt's desk and sticks her hand out. Ed Grant has a half-eaten ham in his hand. In the studio behind him, George, is setting something up.

SUZANNE
Mr. Grant -- I'm the woman you're looking for.

He stares at her. Finally he puts the sandwich down, looks around for something to wipe his hand on, holds his hand up apologetically, indicates a chair. She sits. She opens the sticky zipper on her new briefcase and extracts a resume.

SUZANNE
My name is Suzanne Stone Maretto. But I plan to use Suzanne Stone as my professional name. I'd like you to look over my resume which details both my educational background and my references in the media field and I encourage you to contact any or all of the people on the list for confirmation of my credentials.

She hands him the resume. He looks at it for a moment. She starts to close the zipper on the briefcase, changes her mind, leaves it half open, her hand moving in and out of it, oddly.

SUZANNE
Mr. Grant -- I can make you a solemn promise that -

ED GRANT
Excuse me. Suzanne -- can I call you Suzanne - ?

SUZANNE
I'd like that, Mr. Grant, and I would hope that as time goes on -

ED GRANT
Whoa. Hang on a sec. We're just looking for someone to open the mail, run a couple of errands, minimum pay, no benefits -

SUZANNE
Money is not my main concern, Mr. Grant. I just want a chance to contribute something and I think you'll find that I have valuable ideas about programming. I've studied the demographics in this area very intensely -

ED GRANT
Hey. Stop! You're not hearing what I'm saying. Look around if you would. I mean, Suzanne, we're talking local cable station here. We're on the air about six hours a day - broadcast range forty, fifty miles tops. We do your twice a day weather reports, community service announcements, you know, who got born, who graduated, who died, that kind of thing. Now I can see you're a smart girl and you've got real poise so I say you go over to Mansfield or Troy where they've got network affiliates and -

SUZANNE
I just need to get my foot in the door, Mr. Grant. Everybody has to start somewhere. Do you know where Edward R. Murrow started?

ED GRANT
No I don't -

SUZANNE
Well neither do I offhand but I don't think it was at the top, do you? Mr. Grant - I live only five minutes away from here and I will be willing and eager to respond to any newsworthy emergency -

ED GRANT
Suzanne -

Her hand goes into her briefcase.

SUZANNE
This is the dream I've had all my life. Mr. Grant - I'll do anything to --

George steps into the office. She looks at him.

ED GRANT
This is my associate, George.

SUZANNE
I'm pleased to meet you, George.

He nods. She withdraws her hand from the briefcase.

ED GRANT
Miss Stone here wants the job.

GEORGE
This job? Here?

SUZANNE
You wouldn't be sorry -

ED GRANT
Well we'll think about it.

SUZANNE
Mr. Grant, I believe my assets -

ED GRANT
Hey -- I said we'll think about it. We really will. OK?

Suzanne stands. She reaches across the desk and shakes Ed Grant's hand, steps to George and shakes his hand solemnly, turns and goes. She stops at the door and turns back.

SUZANNE
I believe that in our fast moving computer age it is the medium of television that joins together the global community, and it is the television journalist who serves as messenger, bringing the world into our homes and our homes into the world. It has always been my dream to become such a messenger. I look to you gentlemen now to make that dream a reality.

And she exits. Ed Grant and George stare after her, amused but stunned.

GEORGE
Jesus Christ.

ED GRANT
Gangbusters. Fucking gangbusters.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Suzanne walks away from the WGSL office. Her legs are a little rubbery. She stops at a sidewalk trash receptacle and leans against it, breathing heavily. She straightens up, looks around, opens her briefcase, takes out a sealed envelope tears it into little pieces and stuffs the pieces into the trash.

INT./EXT. (SUZANNE AND LARRY) MARETTO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Larry and Suzanne open the front door and welcome the Marettos, Joe, Faye and Janice, and the Stones, Carol, Earl and Faye to the house. Walter yaps at their feet. He jumps up at Janice's leg and she kicks him away.

INT. STAIRWAY TO THE SECOND FLOOR - NIGHT

As they all go up, following Suzanne, holding Walter in her arms. There's a framed litho of a Warhol cow on the wall.

LARRY
It's a Warhol.

JOE MARETTO
It's a cow.

SUZANNE
Andy Warhol, the famous pop-artist who's dead.

As Angela and Joe follow Larry and Suzanne up the stairs.

ANGELA MARETTO
Andy Warhol, the famous pop-artist who's -

JOE MARETTO
I heard her. He's dead.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

They all wander around the bedroom, admiring things. Janice and Larry stand off to one side. She sticks an elbow in his ribs. He looks at her. She cocks her head toward the King size bed.

JANICE
Volcano-ville?

LARRY
Hey hey hey...

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

They're at the table. In a longshot it looks like they're saying grace. Closer, it is evident that they're staring at the dish in front of each of them which contains something hard to identify.

SUZANNE
Barquettes with leek chiffonade.

They all think about that for a moment.

ANGELA MARETTO
Barquettes with - ?

LARRY
She found it in this great cooking book - what's it called, honey? - "Stomachs of the Stars"? -

SUZANNE
"The Celebrity Cookbook", and this is a dish they serve in Johnny Carson's favorite restaurant in Hollywood. He eats it every night except when they're closed.

Janice takes a forkful.

JANICE
Hey - if it's good enough for Johnny -

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

They're all sitting around. Joe Maretto sneaks a look at his watch. Suzanne is pouring coffee into demi-tasses and handing them out. There's a bit of a silence.

LARRY
Was that a great meal or what? I say Julia Childs better start watching her back.

EARL STONE
To be perfectly frank, if I'd known Suzie could cook like that I wouldn't have let her leave home.

ANGELA MARETTO
It was a wonderful dinner, Suzanne.

SUZANNE
I hope you enjoyed the radiccio salad.

JOE MARETTO
I enjoyed the hell out of it.

SUZANNE
Radiccio is something you ought to consider at the restaurant.

JOE MARETTO
Honey - I been serving radiccio since before you were old enough to pee by yourself.

LARRY
Hey -- we're gonna get fat as a pig on my Suzie's cooking.

SUZANNE
Well I won't be doing this every night. And I'm planning to start this exercize class so I can get rid of a few pounds myself.

JOE MARETTO
Off of where? Your feet?

SUZANNE
On tv, the camera adds five pounds.

ANGELA MARETTO
It does? I didn't know that. Did you know that, Joe?

JOE MARETTO
No.

There's another silence.

JANICE
Talking about exercise, I gotta go. I gotta rehearse at some godawful hour all the way over in Norwalk.

CAROL STONE
Rehearse what, dear?

ANGELA MARETTO
Janice has a job with the Ice Follies. They go on tour in September.

LARRY
Hey, sis, that's fabulous.

JANICE
I'm just one of the chorus, you know, but I'm featured in this one medley - a kind of salute to the great tv shows - and I skate the Peggy Lipton part in the Mod Squad number -

SUZANNE
Peggy Lipton.

JANICE
Yeah - blonde wig and everything -

Janice gets up. Joe and Earl stand up.

CAROL STONE
How exciting.

JANICE
- and they're talking about maybe a tv special at the end of the year.

Faye looks over at Suzanne who's looking at Janice. Larry suddenly stands. He takes Suzanne's hand.

LARRY
Well everybody hang on a minute because we've got a pretty important announcement of our own and I think congratulations are in order because -

Angela Maretto lets out a shriek and her hand goes to her mouth.

ANGELA MARETTO
Joe -- Joe --

JOE MARETTO
Are we talking about - ?

CAROL STONE
Oh, honey, when did you - ?

SUZANNE
Wait wait WAIT -- CUT. CUT! It's not <u>that</u>!

ANGELA MARETTO
You're not -- ?

SUZANNE
I'm not pregnant, for god's sake, no.

She laughs. They all look at her. Larry puts his arm around her.

LARRY
Suzie's got a job.

EARL STONE
What?

LARRY
Over at WGSL. First woman they've ever hired. Is that right?

SUZANNE
That's right.

LARRY
Our Suzie's on her way and nothing can stop her now.

INT. JOE AND ANGELA'S CAR - NIGHT - (MOVING)

Driving home from the dinner party. Angela stares out the window. Joe looks at her, turns back, looks again. Angela doesn't turn.

ANGELA
Mind your own business, Joe.

INT. TV STUDIO STAGE - THE MARETTO'S - AS BEFORE

JOE MARETTO
We're all different and that's what's supposed to make life interesting, am I right? We're the Marettos and they're the Stones and so what? There's this guy who's a construction worker, wears overalls probably, got cement under his fingernails, and the next day he's married to Elizabeth Taylor. The guy comes home from a hot day in his tractor rig and climbs into a big pink bed with Cleopatra. Who are we to judge?

EXT. STREET - DAY

Angela Maretto stands outside a grocery/specialty food store, A man named SAL comes out of the store with a box of produce. They walk to her car and he puts the box inside, while:

SAL
How're the newlyweds?

ANGELA
They're doin' great, thanks, Sal.

SAL
Cute kids.

ANGELA
Aren't they just.

SAL
How'd you like the barquettes?

ANGELA
What?

SAL
With that leek chiffonade or whatever. Was it OK?

ANGELA
It was delicious.

SAL
Tell you the truth, we never made it before but she showed us the recipe in a book so -

ANGELA
And the radiccio salad.

SAL
Yeah, well, I told her it'd be a lot cheaper if she just made it herself but she says: well you know I'm a working woman and my time is too valuable to -

Angela starts the engine, drowning the rest of it out.

INT. TV STUDIO - THE MARETTOS - AS BEFORE

ANGELA MARETTO
Suzanne calls me up one day and says: Hi, Angela, let's do lunch. "Do lunch"? What the hell is that? Anyway -- she came over to the house and I offered to teach her how to make some of Larry's favorite dishes, but she said: why bother, we're happy ordering in

ANGELA MARETTO (CONT)
from Fast Eddie's Pizza. I said you know, Suzanne, even famous women like to cook. She said Murphy Brown can't cook an egg. I said yeah but Murphy Brown isn't a real person. She said yeah but she's a role model. I said yeah but she's a bitch on wheels. The conversation wasn't really going anywhere. I never told anyone. Even Joe. So she couldn't cook. There are worse crimes. As we all know.

INT. (SUZANNE AND LARRY) STONE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Suzanne and Larry are in bed. Walter lies nearby. The radio-alarm goes off. Suzanne starts to get out of bed. Larry grabs her arm.

LARRY
Come on back a minute.

SUZANNE
Got to go to work.

LARRY
Come on. Ten minutes.

SUZANNE
Got to go.

LARRY
Five minutes.

SUZANNE
Got to put my face on.

LARRY
Hey - put your face on me.
(pause)
Two minutes.

SUZANNE
Take your hand away.

He does. She goes into the bathroom and closes the door. Walter, outside the door, yaps. After a few seconds she opens the door and lets Walter in. She's brushing her teeth. She looks at Larry.

SUZANNE
I'll make it up to you later.

She shuts the door.

INT. TV STATION (WGSL) - DAY - ED GRANT - AS BEFORE

ED GRANT
There wasn't a lot to do. Most of the time she sat over there and she worked on her file. Her idea file. She had so many ideas.

INT. TV STATION (WGSL) - DAY - SERIES OF SHOTS

Suzanne holds out a piece of paper.

SUZANNE
This is a presentation on that idea I told you for me going to the local movie theaters and talking to people coming out to see what they really think -- an actual vox populae, if you know the term --

Another day. Different clothes. Same action.

SUZANNE
Here's a memo on the children's show I mentioned with me as hostess and the live in-studio animals if you could just look it over tonight and give me your thoughts --

Another day. Different clothes. Same action.

SUZANNE
A couple of pages outlining that concept for interviewing everyday citizens like mailmen and school crossing guards to better inform our citizenry on what valuable services --

INT. TV STATION (WGSL) - DAY - ED GRANT - AS BEFORE

ED GRANT
So after a few months she wore me down and I let her do the evening weather report which she did fine at although all the preparation she put into it you'd think she was covering D-Day.

INT. TV STATION (WGSL) BROADCASTING STUDIO - NIGHT

Suzanne stands by a weather chart. George, behind the camera, gives her the countdown and points to her. She stares at him.

GEORGE
You're on.

SUZANNE
Good evening from the WGSL weather center.

INT. TV STATION (WGSL) OFFICE - NIGHT

ED GRANT
Weather center?

INT. TV STATION (WGSL) BROADCASTING STUDIO - NIGHT

SUZANNE
The good news is that the heavy system we were expecting isn't going to show up after all, although the temperature for tonight and, probably, the next couple of days...

INT. STONE HOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Earl, Carol and Faye, eating tv dinners, watch Suzanne on TV.

SUZANNE
...will remain unseasonably cool with patches of fog in the mornings and, possibly...

INT. MARETTO'S TAVERN - NIGHT

Lots of customers. Larry stands on the bar, adjusting the tv picture. Joe Maretto is at a table with some customers.

LARRY
HEY! QUIET! LET'S HAVE SOME QUIET!

SUZANNE
(on tv)
...some light precipitation but not serious umbrella weather. The winds are at about seven to ten miles per hour and sunrise will be at six-twelve. That's about it for your up-to-the-minute weather report. This is your WGSL weather-person, saying: I'll be with you again tomorrow evening -- rain or shine.

And the tv picture changes to a map of the area with a logo on it that says: "RAIN OR SHINE with Suzanne Stone" and starts to roll.

Larry gives a yell of enthusiasm. Many of the customers applaud.

INT. WHITE ROOM - JIMMY EMMETT - AS BEFORE

JIMMY
I never really gave a rats ass about the weather until I got to know Mrs. Maretto. Now I take it very serious. Because of her and her interest in it. I can't even think about the weather without thinking about her. Sometimes if there's thunder or lightning or it snows I have to jack off.
(stares off camera)
Sorry.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Jimmy and his pal, RUSSELL HINES, Jimmy's age, sit on a fence near the school parking lot, sharing a joint. Lydia stands near them, eating a candy bar. They watch as the Datsun drives up and Suzanne gets out and walks toward the school entrance. Russell grabs Lydia's skirt in mock lust. She pulls away, laughing.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

MR. FINLAYSSON, mean as a snake, stands on a small stage and speaks to a group of students. Suzanne sits in a chair nearby. Jimmy and Russell sit next to each other, Lydia just behind them.

MR. FINLAYSSON
Our guest today - Mrs. Maretto - is a representative of our local tv station, WGSL, and she -

SUZANNE
- On air correspondent -

MR. FINLAYSSON
Sorry?

SUZANNE
Actually I'm an on-air correspondent.

MR. FINLAYSSON
Well, that's fine. Anyway, Mrs. Maretto has asked to have a few words with you and I know while I'm gone you'll give her your best attention.

Mr. Finlaysson goes to the door. Russell grabs his crotch and whispers to Jimmy:

RUSSELL
Here's my best attention.

Jimmy giggles dutifully. Mr. Finlaysson stops at the door.

MR. FINLAYSSON
Did you say something, Russell?

RUSSELL
No, Mr. Finlaysson, I didn't.

Mr. Finlaysson gives him a killer look, raises a warning forefinger and exits.

SUZANNE
Well, first of all, I want to thank you for extending me the courtesy of your time and attention -

RUSSELL
(quietly)
I got something to extend...

SUZANNE
- and to tell you that I hope you'll be as excited about the project I'm here to propose to you as I am. First of all, I want to ask you if any of you have actually been on television before, not counting home video, of course. No one?

Lydia slowly raises her hand. Other students look at Lydia with thinly veiled contempt. Russell makes a rude noise.

LYDIA
(protesting)
I <u>was</u>.

SUZANNE
What's your name?

LYDIA
Lydia Mertz.

SUZANNE
And under what specific circumstances would that have been, Lydia?

LYDIA
What do you mean?

SUZANNE
How did it happen that you made this appearance?

LYDIA
Oh. It was down at Benson's Electronics. They have a tv camera in the window and when you walk in front they take your picture.

There's general laughter and groaning. Lydia is embarrassed.

SUZANNE
Well, Lydia, this may come as a surprise but that's the way some of our most famous personalities started out -- just seeing what they looked like accidentally.

LYDIA
Is that true?

SUZANNE
Absolutely. Now I'm producing a television documentary about kids just like yourself. Because it's teenagers like you who are the future of our nation. And after all, I used to be a teenager myself. Back in the dark ages.

She gives a little laugh. They just stare at her.

SUZANNE
So I want to find out about your way of life and about how you really feel about your education, how you feel about things like peer pressure, how you feel about drugs - uh - rap music - uh -

RUSSELL
Pussy?

Suzanne falters. Her eye twitches. Jimmy raises his hand.

JIMMY
Uh - would we have to get permission slips from our parents about this?

SUZANNE
(quietly)
No. That wouldn't be necessary.

A couple of boys make sucking noises.

A BOY
Hey, Jimmy, when did your folks learn to read and write?

Jimmy turns angrily and gives him the finger.

JIMMY
Hey, read this, shitface.

SUZANNE
All right, here's what I'll do. I'm going to leave this list on your bulletin board and anyone who thinks this project would be as meaningful as I know it can be should just put their name on it -

Russell drops a pencil on the floor and bends way down to pick it up, slowly, so he can look up Suzanne's dress.

SUZANNE
- and I want to thank you all for your interest.

Russell sits up quickly as Mr. Finlaysson comes back in.

MR. FINLAYSSON
Everything settled?

SUZANNE
Oh yes.

MR. FINLAYSSON
Well then let's give Mrs. Maretto our thanks and a round of applause.

Mr. Finlaysson claps his hands slowly and the others follow.

INT. SCHOOL HALL - DAY

Jimmy stands at a window, watching Mr. Finlaysson walking Suzanne to her car. Lydia comes up and stands alongside him.

LYDIA
She's real pretty, isn't she?

But he moves away as though she's not there. She looks after him.

INT. A ROOM - SUZANNE - AS BEFORE

SUZANNE
I once saw this tv travel and fashion show where a famous model, I believe it was Christie Brinkley, was posing in the middle of some African country -- and all these natives, carrying spears and wearing nothing but little pieces of cloth over their personal parts, just looked at her in awe, not being able to even imagine what it must be like to travel around in limousines and go to night clubs and have songs written for them by Billy Joel. My feeling is that it probably was the same thing for these kids -- that it was the first time they ever met someone like myself who was part of a world that they had no concept of.

INT.HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Jimmy moves to the bulletin board, looks at Suzanne's list which says "TEENS SPEAK OUT - a video documentary by Suzanne Stone Maretto" and quickly writes his name on the list. He stands back and looks at it and mouths her name: "Suzanne". As he moves off, Lydia comes from around a corner where she's been watching.

EXT. MERTZ PORCH - DAY - LYDIA - AS BEFORE

LYDIA
I never signed up for anything before except once an after school weight-watchers class which I was asked to leave because they said I wasn't motivated and because after three weeks I gained eleven pounds. But this was different because it turned out to be the most important thing I ever did.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Lydia moves away down the hall, passing a closed office door on whose opaque glass panel is written:

HOWARD FINLAYSSON
Citizenship
Geography
Hygiene

SMUT has been written in magic marker over the word Hygiene.

The SOUNDS of a SMACK and a THUD come from inside the office.

INT. FINLAYSSON'S OFFICE - DAY

Russell is on the floor, holding the side of his head. Mr. Finlaysson, smiling, picks up an overturned chair.

MR. FINLAYSSON
That was very very impolite, Russell.

RUSSELL
I wasn't doing anything, Mr. Finlaysson, honest to god... I dropped my pencil is all.

Finlaysson pushes the chair at him and Russell sits down.

MR. FINLAYSSON
No, I don't think so. I think that you were looking up Mrs. Maretto's dress. That's what I think.

RUSSELL
No, sir, absolutely not. I was not.

MR. FINLAYSSON
Really? Really really really?

Mr. Finlaysson makes a move toward him. Russell puts an arm up.

RUSSELL
It's against the law what you're doing, Mr. Finlaysson.

MR. FINLAYSSON
Against the law?

RUSSELL
Corporate punishment.

Finlaysson sighs. He shakes his head.

MR. FINLAYSSON
Corporate punishment. If all my students were like you, Russell, you know what I'd do?

Russell stares at him.

MR. FINLAYSSON
I'd hang myself. Yes, I would. That's exactly what I'd do. Now here's some advice. That nice Mrs. Maretto is married to a young man who went to this very high school and that boy's father is a pillar of the Italian-American community and he is a kind and generous man but - if he knew how you had insulted his only daughter-in-law - he would make a phone call -- one phone call -- and a man would show up at your house in the middle of the night -- are you listening, Russell, dear?

RUSSELL
Yeah.

MR. FINLAYSSON
- you remember how in Hygiene the other day we talked about the testicles - ?

RUSSELL
Yeah.

MR. FINLAYSSON
- and this man would take out a big knife and cut off your testicles and - do you have inside plumbing at your house - ?

RUSSELL
Yeah.

MR. FINLAYSSON
- and he would flush them down the toilet. And do you know what that would make you?

RUSSELL
Yeah - I mean no.

MR. FINLAYSSON
That would make you a eunuch. Do you know what a eunuch is, Russell? Of course you don't. But you can go to the library and find it in the dictionary. If you don't know how to spell it, you can look it up under NUTLESS WONDERS!

Russell stares at Mr. Finlaysson as he moves away to the window and looks out of it, his back to Russell.

MR. FINLAYSSON
So - I'm thinking now - there must be some way - some simple way - that you can make it up to Mrs. Maretto for your offensive behavior. What do you think? Hmmmm?

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Russell writes his name on Suzanne's list.

INT. A ROOM - SUZANNE - AS BEFORE

Suzanne picks up a photograph and shows it to camera. In the photo: Jimmy, Lydia and Russell stand together on a beach. Lydia holds a half-eaten ice-cream cone.

SUZANNE
The question has been asked as to why I selected these three youngsters for my documentary. As though, somehow, my choosing them had some kind of cause and effect on the events that ultimately took place. Which is certainly not the case.

EXT. AMUSEMENT PARK - DAY

ON VIDEO : MATCHING THE PHOTOGRAPH. Lydia puts the cone to her mouth. Russell pokes her hand, pushing the ice cream into her face. Lydia swings at Russell. He pushes her into Jimmy. Jimmy pushes her back into Russell.

INT. A ROOM - SUZANNE - AS BEFORE

SUZANNE
And it wasn't because they were the only ones who signed up. Although, as it happens, they were. It was because my journalistic instincts told me that they were truly genuine representatives of their generation. Which now seems like a pretty depressing thought. But - as so many philosophers have pointed out - the truth is often a terrible downer.

EXT. AUTOMOBILE GRAVEYARD - DAY

Lydia sits in the skeleton of a car, watching Jimmy and Russell who are wandering around the junkers, looking for something to steal and smashing what's left of windows.

RUSSELL
I bet he jumps her all the time. I bet they do it on the kitchen table after dinner. Or even during.

JIMMY
Yeah. Maybe both.

RUSSELL
Skinny bitches can't get enough of it. That's a medical fact.

JIMMY
Yeah.

RUSSELL
It's because the nerves in their body are all bunched in close to their snatch.

LYDIA
I don't think that's true.

RUSSELL
What are you - a doctor?

LYDIA
She's a perfectly nice person.

RUSSELL
What do you think - she's gonna make you a movie star?

LYDIA
Just to be on tv would be nice. It'd be something different.

RUSSELL
Hey Lydia - I got something different for you right here.

LYDIA
You're a disgusting pig.

He makes some disgusting pig noises.

RUSSELL
Maybe we can get some money out of her.

JIMMY
Who says she's got any?

RUSSELL
You shitting me? Her husband, Mr. Big Dick, owns some kind of ginny restaurant. You see that Jap car she drives? You see those red fingernails? That's rich bitch stuff.

JIMMY
Yeah. Maybe.

RUSSELL
You think she's some kind of hot shit, dontcha?

JIMMY
She just looks so --

RUSSELL
What? So - what?

JIMMY
Clean.

INT. A ROOM - SUZANNE - AS BEFORE

SUZANNE
I have to say that the staff at WGSL responded with total enthusiasm to my concept and gave me excellent support, both editorially and technically..

INT. TV STATION (WGSL) - DAY - ED GRANT - AS BEFORE

ED GRANT
I loaned her one of our old minicams and we hardly saw her for the rest of the summer except when she came in to do the weather or to work on her editing which was a great relief because, frankly, she was getting on our nerves...

INT. A ROOM - SUZANNE - AS BEFORE

SUZANNE
...because I think they could sense almost immediately that I was on to something important in the sociological sense...

INT. TV STATION (WGSL) - DAY - ED GRANT - AS BEFORE

ED GRANT
...and she must have taped god knows how many hundreds of hours with these three dorky kids who, from what I've seen, would have a major struggle on their hands just to recite the days of the week in proper order, forget about social insights...here -- I'll show you...

He picks up a remote control and punches a button and the picture of Suzanne's face on the tv monitor behind him unfreezes.

ON THE MONITOR

SUZANNE
This is Teens Speak Out Project, tape one, take one, I'm Suzanne Stone, and these are --

She reaches forward and the image goes out of focus as she turns the camera around and refocusses on Jimmy, Lydia and Russell who are sitting on benches at a wooden picnic table in a municipal park.

SUZANNE
Lydia?

EXT. MUNICIPAL PARK - DAY

MATCHING the SCENE on the tv monitor: Suzanne, sitting across the table from the kids, balances the camera on the table, looking down through the eye-piece. Walter sits at her feet.

LYDIA
Yes.

SUZANNE
Say - your - name.

RUSSELL
She forgot it.

He giggles. Lydia hits him on the arm. Suzanne looks up from the eye-piece, a flash of anger:

SUZANNE
We'll get to you in a minute. Lydia?

LYDIA
Lydia Mertz.

SUZANNE
Now you.

RUSSELL
Russell H. for Horny Hines.

She moves the camera to Jimmy.

JIMMY
Jimmy Emmett.

SUZANNE
See? That wasn't too difficult, was it? Now let's just say something in general about ourselves.

LYDIA
Like what?

SUZANNE
Like what do you plan to do with your future, Lydia?

LYDIA
I don't exactly have a plan.

SUZANNE
You must have aspirations of some kind.

LYDIA
What?

SUZANNE
A dream. A life goal.

RUSSELL
Hey - I can tell you that, Mrs. Maretto. Lydia's big life goal --

SUZANNE
Yes?

RUSSELL
-- is to fuck the New Kids On The Block.

Lydia yells and swings at Russell who ducks away.

LYDIA
That's a dirty lie!

SUZANNE
Russell, I don't want to hear language like that any more. It's very offensive and unsuitable for broadcast under F.C.C. regulations.

LYDIA
And anyways it was Motley Crue.

SUZANNE
All right, Lydia. And what about you, James?

He stares at her.

SUZANNE
James?

INT. WHITE ROOM - JIMMY - AS BEFORE

JIMMY
Nobody ever called me that before, see? Nobody called me nothing but Jimmy or Jimbo or other things. My mom told me once that I was named Jimmy cause she liked some old movie star named Jimmy Dean but I always said when anybody asked that I was named after Jim Morrison - of The Doors, you know - who had this great kind of life - writing his songs and travelling around and having women beg him to do it to them and even taking his - uh - organ out on stage - the kind of life that I always thought I would like to have if only I could get the opportunity to learn to play music and sing...

EXT. MUNICIPAL PARK - DAY

SUZANNE
James?

JIMMY
Huh?

INT. TV STATION (WGSL) - DAY - ED GRANT - AS BEFORE

Jimmy's face, as in previous scene in park, staring at Suzanne, is on the monitor. PULL BACK as Ed Grant presses a button on the remote, freezing the image.

ED GRANT
I think you can get the point. I mean it's not exactly Mike Wallace, eat your heart out. But I've got to say I never saw more persistance. I once said to her --

INT. TV STATION (WGSL) - NIGHT

Late at night. Suzanne works at a tape editing machine. Ed Grant is putting his jacket on. He turns off his desk lamp. The only light now comes from the editing machine screen. She keeps working while they talk.

ED GRANT
What about we call it a night?

SUZANNE
I just need to get this reel cleaned up. An hour. Maybe two. You go ahead. I'll lock up.

ED GRANT
There's always tomorrow.

SUZANNE
Tomorrow's only an excuse to make a mess of today.

ED GRANT
Uh huh. Hey -- don't you have that nice husband waiting at home?

SUZANNE
He knows how much this means to me. Besides - he's managing his dad's restaurant now so he works real late.

He goes to the door.

ED GRANT
Well Suzanne -- I sure pity the person who says "no" to you.

She turns to him.

SUZANNE
No one ever does.

Ed exits and Suzanne turns to the editing machine and we MOVE IN on the screen.

BEGIN TAPED SEQUENCES - HAND HELD BY SUZANNE

A street. Jimmy, Lydia and Russell pass a wall plastered with posters. Russell stops, turns, goes back to a poster for a rock concert, rips it off the wall and moves away with it.

JUMP CUT TO:

The Hines home: a trailer with a wooden shack added on to it. In front is a wide mud flat, extending to the sound. A battered pickup truck is parked nearby. Russell's mother, JUNE HINES, in her late thirties but looking fifty, puts laundry on a line. A ten year old boy sits in a wheelchair, a baby in his lap, an improvised umbrella attached to its back. A teenage girl in a dirty bathrobe sits on the front steps, putting rollers in her hair. An eight year old boy with a bandage on his neck comes out the door and pushes past her. A four or five year old girl, a rope tied around her waist, tries to climb out one of the trailer windows.

JUMP CUT TO:

TRACKING Russell across the mud flat toward a figure kneeling on the wet sand. It's BABE HINES, Russell's father, a torn baseball cap on his head, a burned down cigarette in the corner of his mouth. He's digging clams out of the mud and putting them into a bucket. He turns as Russell comes near, stands up, says something and whacks Russell in the face with his open hand. He turns toward the camera and grimaces.

JUMP CUT TO:

Inside a downtown clothing store. Lydia as she holds a blouse up against herself and looks in a mirror. She turns toward camera as though responding to something Suzanne has said and her face breaks into a smile and she hugs the blouse.

JUMP CUT TO:

Outside the Mertz house. Lydia, wearing the new blouse, enters.

JUMP CUT TO:

Lydia crosses the living room. Her mother sleeps in a chair in front of the tv set on which an afternoon soap opera plays.

JUMP CUT TO

Lydia climbs the stairs and stops as CHESTER appears, her mother's boyfriend, fifty-ish, unshaven, in trousers and slippers. He moves down to a step above Lydia, puts his hand on Lydia's shoulder and slides it down her back.

JUMP CUT TO:

An amusement park. Jimmy rolls his sleeves up and throws balls at milk cans. He's not very good at it. The camera zooms in on his upper arm which has a tattoo: a skull wearing a helmet.

JUMP CUT TO:

The Emmett home: a tiny wooden one story house, badly in need of paint, sitting in the middle of a yard, strewn with weeds and broken and rusted artifacts: a broken down sofa, an engine of some kind, a carton of old shoes, a picture frame etc. Jimmy stands at the front door.

JUMP CUT TO:

Inside the house. Jimmy stands in the living room. There's an old tv set. There's a cot against one wall with a sheet and blanket and some of Jimmy's clothes on it.

JUMP CUT TO:

In the yard, Jimmy sits on the broken sofa, looking at the camera and at Suzanne behind it. Jimmy's mother, MARY EMMETT, comes out of the house, carrying two glasses of water. She limps. She comes to camera and extends one of the glasses. Suzanne's hand reaches into frame and takes it. Mary moves to the sofa and sits awkwardly next to her son. She looks at the camera.

INT. A ROOM - SUZANNE - AS BEFORE

SUZANNE
Here is a letter I received from a prominent Hollywood talent agency.
(she picks up a letter)
Dear Ms. Stone -- thank you for sending us a sample of your work in progress - Teens Speak Out. It is our company's policy not to screen unsolicited material but your letter suggests that you are a determined young woman and we wish you and your project the best of luck. Sincerely yours, etcetera.
(she lowers the letter)
I found this very encouraging.

INT. DATSUN - DAY - (MOVING)

Suzanne drives. She is wearing a pink suit and dark glasses. She stops for a light. A WOMAN and her TEEN-AGE DAUGHTER cross the street and stare at Suzanne. The teen-age daughter points.

TEEN AGE DAUGHTER
Look, mom, that's that weather girl from the tv.

They stare at Suzanne then move away. She stares out the window.

VOICES
Hey -- it's the rain or shine girl.
Isn't that Suzanne Stone?
It's the television lady!
The one with the tv program!
Did you see that show she did on --
the earthquake...that expose on --
nuclear waste...child abuse...
Did you see her interview with --
Henry Kissinger...Princess Stephanie...
Paul McCartney...

A HORN BLOWS. She starts, and drives away.

EXT. MARETTO (SENIOR) HOUSE BACK YARD - DAY

Late in a very hot day. A party is in progress. Joe cooks hamburgers and hotdogs on a barbecue. Suzanne and Angela sit together. Everybody is dressed very informally except for Suzanne who is in her pink suit. Children play in a rubber pool.

ANGELA
That's a real pretty outfit, honey.

SUZANNE
Thanks.

ANGELA
Pink is nice on you.

SUZANNE
It's not pink so much as rosee actually.

ANGELA
Oh.

SUZANNE
My wardrobe advisor says it diffuses the more intense light. Creates a kind of glow effect.

ANGELA
Who says that?

SUZANNE
I have this wardrobe advisor with who I go over all my on-camera outfits.

ANGELA
Isn't that something.

Larry, across the yard, bouncing someone's child on one arm, waves a hamburger at them.

LARRY
HEY, SUZE, WHAT ABOUT ONE OF THESE?

SUZANNE
NO THANKS.

LARRY
OK -- WHAT ABOUT ONE OF <u>THESE</u>?

He holds the child up and laughs and turns away.

ANGELA
He sure is good with those kids.

SUZANNE
I wish he wouldn't eat all that junk. He's getting a rubber tire around him like an old man.

ANGELA
He's gonna make a wonderful father.

SUZANNE
He calls them love handles. I call them flab.

ANGELA
What about you?

SUZANNE
Me? Do you think I look fat?

ANGELA
What about the idea of kids is what I'm saying. When're you and Larry gonna start thinking about making me a grandmother?

SUZANNE
Oh - I don't know about that. It's so complicated, you know.

ANGELA
What do you mean - complicated?

SUZANNE
Well I love kids, you know, I just love 'em to death, but in my field a woman with a baby has two strikes against her. Say I'm in New York - and I -

ANGELA
New York?

SUZANNE
For instance - and I suddenly get called to go on some foreign assignment -- a royal wedding, for instance, or a revolution in South America -- you can't run from place to place with your nine or ten person crew following and conduct serious interviews with a big fat stomach. Or even, say, the baby's already born and you've got all this blubber and these boobs out to here. It's just so -- gross.

Angela gets up to say goodbye and to someone. Larry slides onto the bench next to Suzanne.

LARRY
You having a good time?

SUZANNE
Oh sure. But I want to get out of the sun. And I've got to go prepare my weather report.

Some little kids come up, make a face at Larry and run off.

LARRY
Like to have a few of those around the house, what do you think?

SUZANNE
I think if you wanted a baby-sitter you should've married Mary Poppins.

Angela hears the remark.

INT. TV STATION (WGSL) - NIGHT

Ed Grant, working at his desk, looks up as Suzanne comes in, wearing her pink suit.

EXT. (SUZANNE AND LARRY) MARETTO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Larry leaves his car in the driveway and goes through the outside kitchen door into the house.

INT. (SUZANNE AND LARRY) MARETTO'S HOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Larry picks up the remote and clicks it on. Suzanne's face comes up on the screen. He sits on the couch and puts his feet up.

SUZANNE
(on tv)
Hi everybody, this is Suzanne Stone with your late night sign-off report from the WGSL weather center. I don't think I have to tell you that today was a hot one. That old mercury zoomed on up to ninety-one...

INT. EMMETT HOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Suzanne's weather report is on the tv screen. The sound is very low. The only light is from the tv. ON THE SCREEN:

SUZANNE
(on tv)
...and for those of you who are interested in statistics, that's a record breaking temperature for this date...

Jimmy lays on his cot in his underpants, watching the screen.

SUZANNE
...and tomorrow promises to be just about the same with the relevant numbers way up there in the nineties and with humidity to match and maybe just the hint of a breeze or two which won't be much help with this heat - the kind of heat that makes me want to just head for that old swimming hole with my friend James and strip off everything including my panties which you can see right through anyway and lie down next to him and

SUZANNE (CONT)
poke my soft pink tongue in his mouth and slide my hand way up the inside of his leg until he's so hot that he just rolls over on top of me and I'm yelling James his name James James what are you doing to me with your big fat hard -

CLOSE ON JIMMY'S FACE

As his eyes snap open. There's a test pattern on the tv screen.

JIMMY
Oh Jesus.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - DAY - (THROUGH THE VIDEOCAM)

Russell, Jimmy and Lydia come out of a store and walk away.

JUMP CUT TO:

The terrace of a fast food joint. Jimmy, Lydia and Russell sit at a table with an umbrella. They have half-eaten hamburgers and French fries. They giggle as they put on the table the items they've stolen from the store: a pen, a clip-on necktie, a Chia pet, a pair of sun glasses, a lipstick, a TV Guide, etc. It makes quite a pile. STOP TAPE appears in the corner of the screen.

EXT. FAST FOOD JOINT - DAY

As Suzanne puts the minicam aside. Walter's face sticks out of a straw bag at her side.

SUZANNE
You guys are bad.

RUSSELL
Oh yeah. We're bad. Badass. We're the badass gang.

SUZANNE
Aren't you aware of the fact that somebody has to pay for these things?

JIMMY
They got insurance, don't they?

SUZANNE
Somebody has to pay for the insurance. Did you ever consider that point?

LYDIA
But we were just -- we didn't mean --

SUZANNE
Don't you know that crime doesn't pay?

RUSSELL
Who says?

SUZANNE
I say.

RUSSELL
Well who the fuck are you?

Suzanne turns to him with a look. Russell takes in her look.

EXT. HINES HOUSE - NIGHT

A squat SCARY LOOKING MAN, wearing a black hat and a black suit, walks toward the Hines trailer and, as he approaches the door, pulls a long knife from his pocket.

EXT. FAST FOOD JOINT - DAY

RUSSELL
Hey -- I didn't mean that. I didn't mean who the fuck are you in the way it sounded. I meant it like you would say no shit -- or no kidding -- something like that.

LYDIA
Mrs. Maretto -- we could take the stuff back. We could leave it at the entrance.

JIMMY
Or we could mail it to them.

SUZANNE
Well I think that would be a very commendable thing to do. That would show that you really cared about other people's feelings.

JIMMY
Yeah. Then that's what we'll do. We'll take all this stuff back. OK?

Suzanne smiles at them.

SUZANNE
Yes. Except for this -
(she picks up the lipstick)
- which is exactly the shade I've been looking for.

She opens the lipstick. They look at her, astonished. She reaches takes Lydia's chin in one hand and puts lipstick on her lips.

RUSSELL
Hey, Mrs. Maretto -- that's stolen goods you're using --

SUZANNE
We're going to turn Lydia into a glamour girl --

RUSSELL
Oh yeah and where you gonna get a new body for her?

Lydia hits Russell on the arm. Suzanne reaches out, grabs Russell's face and smears lipstick in the general area of his mouth. Lydia laughs hysterically. Russell pulls away.

RUSSELL
HEY HEY YOU'RE GONNA MAKE ME LOOK LIKE A HOMO...

He grabs a napkin and wipes his face furiously. Suzanne is laughing. Jimmy and Lydia start laughing. Russell throws a French fry at Lydia. Jimmy throws one back at Russell. Russell throws his balled-up napkin at Lydia who ducks and it hits Suzanne. Suzanne picks up the plastic mustard container and squirts a stream at Russell. He yells and grabs the ketchup container. They're all screaming as they shower each other with food.

SUZANNE
(laughing)
Stop! THAT'S ENOUGH!

They stop, breathing heavily. They try to calm down. Suzanne looks at Jimmy. There's a string of ketchup across his face. She points at him and starts laughing again. So does Lydia. Jimmy wipes his face and looks at the ketchup on his shirt.

JIMMY
Je-sus, I got this stuff all over me.

They calm down again. Suzanne reaches out, wipes a patch of ketchup off his face with her finger and then licks it off. He stares at her. She looks at him and tilts her head.

SUZANNE
You know what we're going to do, James?

She leans forward and brushes his hair up off his forehead.

SUZANNE
We're going to get you a nice haircut so we can see those pretty brown eyes.

INT. WHITE ROOM - JIMMY - AS BEFORE

JIMMY
It was like I was one in of those -- you know those great movies where everyone comes out of their graves with half their faces all missing, an eye hanging out and their lips dropping off, and they walk around real slow kind of grunting and looking for regular live people to eat their flesh and drink their blood and all? And they can't help themselves 'cause they're dead and it's just what happens? That's what I felt like. Only what I was thinking about wasn't that. What I was thinking about was what does her hair smell like. And is she really a real blonde. And what kind of sound does she make when Mr. Maretto -- you know -- sticks it in. The kind of things you think about when you get to know someone for the first time.

INT. MALL - DAY

Suzanne and Lydia are window shopping. They stop and look into the window of a store that sells sexy underwear.

INT. STORE - CHANGING ROOM - DAY

Lydia sits on a stool in a corner of the changing room. WE SEE only flashes of Suzanne -- her hand, her arm, her hair, her ankle -- as she undresses and puts on a combination of erotic clothing. WE WATCH Lydia -- shy, embarrassed, confused, envious, worshipful -- as she watches Suzanne. When Suzanne is fully dressed in the full sexy outfit, she turns from the mirror and faces Lydia.

SUZANNE
What do you think?

LYDIA
Oh it's real -- wow! Mr. Maretto's gonna be so --

SUZANNE
Mr. Maretto?

Suzanne snorts a laugh and turns back to the mirror.

INT. THE MALL - DAY

SUZANNE
Sometimes, Liddy -- you just have to do things for yourself. You should always have beautiful things-- secret things that mean something just to you. Do you understand?

EXT. MERTZ HOUSE PORCH - DAY - LYDIA - AS BEFORE

LYDIA
Mrs. Maretto bought lots of nice stuff -- this ankle bracelet, for instance, and a bottle of real expensive perfume - scent, she called it - scent - which I'm saving for a special occasion. Nobody ever bought me things before. Except Chester - my mom's boyfriend - got me for my birthday when I was twelve a bottle of something called Garden Of Eden Body Oil which he said would be good for my skin and which he wanted to show me how to use. Which I let him do.

EXT. MALL - DAY

Suzanne and Lydia sit at a table, drinking soft drinks.

SUZANNE
Why did you let him do that to you?

LYDIA
Well -- at first it was just my back, you know, and then my legs and then, before I knew it, it was the other stuff.

SUZANNE
What did you do?

LYDIA
Well -- then he showed me how to use it on him.

SUZANNE
Why didn't you say something? Why didn't you scream?

LYDIA
Well he seemed like it made him so happy, you know. And I didn't want to wake up my mom.

SUZANNE
When did it stop?

LYDIA
Oh -- I guess -- when the bottle ran out.

SUZANNE
My god, Liddy --

LYDIA
And he'd do other things. For a while. But when I was fourteen I gained all this weight and he wasn't so interested any more. Except now and then.

SUZANNE
You mean he still -- ?

LYDIA
No because there's this old gun my mom has hidden in her closet that she got because of all the sex fiend killers around and I told him one time if he didn't leave me alone I'd get it out and shoot him.

SUZANNE
Oh.

EXT. MERTZ HOUSE PORCH - DAY - LYDIA - AS BEFORE

LYDIA
And now I guess I wish I hadn't told her all that. Because maybe it put some things in her mind. I don't know. But I just told her stuff I never told anyone else. Because she was my friend.

INT. DATSUN - DAY - MOVING - SUZANNE AND LYDIA

The Datsun stops near the Mertz house. Lydia starts to get out.

SUZANNE
You know what I think? I think this isn't the real world. This dopey little town. The real world is where I'm going. And I'm going to be in a real city with a real tv studio and a real show and a real audience. And guess who's going to be with me and be like my social secretary and answer my fan mail.

LYDIA
Who?

SUZANNE
You are, Liddy.

EXT. MERTZ HOUSE PORCH - DAY - LYDIA - AS BEFORE

LYDIA
She was my only real friend.

SOUND OF A PHONE RINGING

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

A run of the mill hotel room somewhere in the northeast. Janice Maretto is lying on her bed in her underwear and a t-shirt, doing her toenails. Her hair is up. No makeup. The bathroom door is open and one of her ice-show co-skaters is in the bathroom, washing her hair in the sink. There are open suitcases and their clothes are scattered around. Their skates are in evidence. The tv set is on and tuned to a late night talk show.

Janice picks up the phone.

JANICE
Yeah?...Sorry -- who?...Larry. Larry!

The other girl looks around the bathroom door.

JANICE
(to the girl)
It's my brother.

The girl goes back in and continues washing her hair.

JANICE
What's the matter?...Oh. Yeah. Everything's swell...Yeah, the show's a sell-out and...Hey are mom and dad OK?...Good...What?...Guys? Are you kidding?...Well, a hot looking eight year old came back after the show last night but he had to choose between me and his homework and...Hey, listen, what's goin' on?...You never call me this late... Where's Suzanne?...What do you mean -- shooting? What's she shooting?...Oh yeah?... Well -- she'll be through with it some day, won't she?...So she takes it to New York and shows it to someone and comes back and...Los Angeles -- what's Los Angeles got to do with it?...A course in what?...Advanced Media? Advanced bullshit! Hey listen, I know you love her and you want her to succeed and all that but, Larry, sometimes you have to say no. I mean -- try it. No. N-O. Hey -- say it like you mean it. Right! OK. Hey -- happy anniversary if I don't talk to you next week. Oh, and Lar -- kick the dog for me, will you? Hey I'm kidding. Sort of.
(she laughs)
I'll see you in about a month. OK? OK???...Yeah...Love ya.

She hangs up as her friend comes out of the bathroom, towelling her hair dry, and looks at her.

JANICE
Shit.

<u>INT. (SUZANNE AND LARRY) MARETTO HOUSE - NIGHT</u>

Suzanne comes in quietly and starts up the stairs.

LARRY'S VOICE
Suzanne.

She starts, turns and looks into the dark living room where Larry is sitting. There are a couple of empty beer bottles at his side.

SUZANNE
What are you doing?

LARRY
Just sitting here. Waiting for you.

SUZANNE
Oh. Well. I'm sorry I'm so late. I was at the station making my notes for -

LARRY
We have to talk about some things.

SUZANNE
We do?

LARRY
Yeah.

SUZANNE
What kind of things?

LARRY
Come on, Suze. You know what kind of things.

SUZANNE
Well I don't think I do. I mean can't it wait until tomorrow because it's the middle of the night now and I really have to -

LARRY
No.

SUZANNE
What?

LARRY
No. I don't think it can wait. No.

She stares at him across the dark room.

<u>EXT. MERTZ HOUSE PORCH - DAY - LYDIA - AS BEFORE</u>

LYDIA
Mrs. Maretto said I was going to be be real proud at how I would come out when the film was finished. She said that a person's outside looks don't really count which is more or less what my mom was telling me since I was about three. She said in the real world "opposites attract" -- like with the famous

LYDIA (CONT)
model Paulina what's-her-name who married that funny looking rock and roll guy from The Cars or Jackie Kennedy and the hundred year old Greek billionaire or just look at all the fabulous women who throw themselves at Mick Jagger who, she said, might be a real talent but, let's face it, could have played The Joker without using any special makeup. Course later I was thinking how come she couldn't come up with any examples of great looking guys throwing themselves at dumpy looking women. And then one day she said:

INT. DATSUN - DAY - (MOVING) - SUZANNE AND LYDIA

SUZANNE
What do you think about James?

LYDIA
Think how?

SUZANNE
Do you think he's cute?

LYDIA
Uhhh -- yeah. I mean - do you?

SUZANNE
(laughs)
He's a little young for me, wouldn't you say?

LYDIA
Well -- yeah.

SUZANNE
Do you think he likes me?

LYDIA
Oh sure. He told me he admires you very much.

EXT. MERTZ HOUSE PORCH - DAY - LYDIA - AS BEFORE

LYDIA
What I didn't tell her is what he actually said to me --

EXT. VACANT LOT - DAY

Jimmy and Lydia sit on a boulder.

JIMMY
Mrs. Maretto's different than any woman I ever knew. I mean -- it's just -- everyone else seems like dogshit next to her.

EXT. MERTZ HOUSE PORCH - DAY - LYDIA - AS BEFORE

LYDIA
-- which was the most romantic thing I ever heard anybody say.

INT. (SUZANNE AND LARRY) MARETTO'S HOUSE BEDROOM/BATHROOM - DAY

Suzanne, watched by Walter, finishes dressing. She looks at herself in the bathroom mirror.

INT. (SUZANNE AND LARRY) MARETTO'S HOUSE STAIRS - DAY

As Suzanne comes down the stairs, followed by Walter.

SUZANNE
No, Walter, you stay home. You be a good boy.

The PHONE RINGS. She moves to the front door and looks at herself in the hallway mirror, as the answering machine picks up.

SUZANNE'S VOICE
(on the answering machine)
You have reached the home of Suzanne Stone Maretto and Larry Maretto. Please leave a message at the sound of the tone.

The BEEP is followed by Larry's voice.

LARRY'S VOICE
Hey, babe, pick up if you're there.

SUZANNE
(to Walter)
Mamma be home soon.

She exits. Walter looks at the door.

LARRY'S VOICE
Suzanne? Are you there?

EXT. STREET - NIGHT - (TWILIGHT)

Jimmy stands, waiting. His hair is shorter. The Datsun stops.

SUZANNE
Well, James, don't we look nice.

INT. DATSUN - TWILIGHT - (MOVING)

Suzanne and Jimmy. She drives fast. She picks up a cassette.

SUZANNE
You like Aerosmith?

JIMMY
Yeah. They're pretty cool.

The music comes up loud. She drives faster, beating out the rythym, more or less accurately, on the steering wheel. She removes the clip from her hair and swings it free.

SUZANNE
I adore their music. It's so free. Don't you think so?

JIMMY
Absolutely.

SUZANNE
It gives you that wonderful feeling like you're sixteen again, you know?

JIMMY
Well, I am sixteen.

SUZANNE
That's right. You are. Sometimes I forget that because you seem so much more adult than the others.

JIMMY
Oh. Thanks.

SUZANNE
At home we listen mostly to things that appeal to my husband's taste -- top forty and a lot of ballads sung by the older Italian singers.

JIMMY
I thought Mr. Maretto played drums in a rock band once.

SUZANNE
Well - that was before we became an old boring married couple.

He sneaks a look at her legs.

SUZANNE
Is something wrong?

JIMMY
Oh no. I was just wondering where your camera and stuff was.

SUZANNE
Well James -- we can't just go sauntering in with a lot of equipment. This is what in the field of investigative journalism we call an "expose". Did you see that piece on PBS the other night on teen drinking?

JIMMY
No, I missed that. I don't think we get that station on our set.

SUZANNE
It was very revealing. And the people they were talking to didn't even know they were being taped because they use these special tiny cameras which they hide in places you wouldn't believe.

JIMMY
Like where?

SUZANNE
Well, I'm not at liberty to say. It's a kind of trade secret.

JIMMY
Oh.

SUZANNE
Unfortunately I don't as yet have access to that kind of equipment. So this will be a sort of preliminary fact-finding mission. Then we can plan phase two.

JIMMY
Oh yeah. Phase two.

EXT. AMUSEMENT PARK - NIGHT

Suzanne and Jimmy walk toward the main section of the park on the far side of which is a boardwalk and, beyond that, the beach.

EXT. TATTOO PARLOR - NIGHT

Suzanne and Jimmy stand in front of a tattoo parlor. Among the signs in the window is one that says: NO MINORS. Through the window, we can see the walls covered with tattoo designs and a man, THE TATTOOER, tattoo-covered, bearded, leather-vested and pony-tailed, etching a design on the ankle of a girl while her boy-friend holds her hand.

SUZANNE
I want a drink.

EXT. AMUSEMENT PARK RESTAURANT/BAR - NIGHT

Suzanne and Jimmy at a table. Jimmy has a coke. Suzanne is finishing a Marguerita. A waitress brings her another one. Suzanne gives her some money and she goes away.

SUZANNE
Did you know that on many primitive islands all the boys and girls get these very elaborate tattoos when they reach a certain age?

JIMMY
Yeah? Why is that?

SUZANNE
It's a sign that they have reached their sexual maturity.

JIMMY
Oh.

She reaches out and touches Jimmy's tattoo.

SUZANNE
How did you decide on the design?

JIMMY
I don't know. I just picked it.

SUZANNE
Did it hurt?

JIMMY
I don't remember. I was sort of wasted, to tell you the truth.

She slurps half of the fresh drink through the straw and looks at him over the glass.

SUZANNE
Bad boy.

ANOTHER PART OF THE AMUSEMENT PARK - NIGHT

The stand, watching the Ferris Wheel revolve. Three punky looking kids walk by, two boys and a girl. One of the boys yells:

BOY
Hey, Jimbo!

JIMMY
Hey, Ray. Hey, Killer. Hey, Jolene.

The kids stare at Suzanne. She has a half empty bottle of beer in her hand. She stares back at them. They move on, laughing.

SUZANNE
That boy's name is Killer?

JIMMY
That's what we call him cause he almost killed a guy.

SUZANNE
Oh. A wild one.

JIMMY
Yeah. He set this guy on fire.

SUZANNE
Did he go to jail?

JIMMY
No. Cause he was only fourteen.

SUZANNE
I imagine he'd be an interesting subject to inteview for our film.

She moves away.

JIMMY
He's not a very nice person.

EXT. AMUSEMENT PARK PENNY ARCADE - NIGHT

Suzanne pulls Jimmy inside. Through the window we can see them stop in front of a TAKE YOUR OWN PHOTO booth. Suzanne pulls Jimmy into the booth and shuts the curtain.

MOVE IN SLOWLY as the strobe lights in the booth begin to flash. We can HEAR SUZANNE LAUGHING.

INT. A ROOM - SUZANNE - AS BEFORE

SUZANNE
The fact is -- I am not a drinker. Alcohol or drugs have never - never been part of my psychological profile, in spite of the fact that so many members of the entertainment field - I'm certainly not naming names - are reknowned for their substance abuse, past or present.

EXT. TATTOO PARLOR - NIGHT

Jimmy sits down on a bench across from the tattoo parlor. Suzanne walks, slightly unsteadily, to the tattoo parlor.

INT. TATTOO PARLOR - NIGHT

Suzanne enters. There are neon fixtures everywhere. The walls are filled with garish designs. The bearded pony-tailed tattoo artist comes toward her. LOUD MIX OF SOUNDS FROM THE AMUSEMENT PARK.

INT. A ROOM - SUZANNE - AS BEFORE

SUZANNE
And that, honestly, is the last thing I can remember.

INT. (SUZANNE AND LARRY) MARETTO HOUSE BEDROOM - DAY

Early morning. Suzanne wakes up, looks over at Larry asleep. She gets out of bed quietly. She's wearing pajama tops. She goes to the bathroom, goes in and closes the door.

INT. (SUZANNE AND LARRY) MARETTO HOUSE BATHROOM - DAY

Suzanne looks into the bathroom mirror. She slowly undoes the buttons of her pajama top and stares at the reflection. We DON'T SEE what she's looking at. The bathroom door opens.

LARRY
Hey, Suze...?

She spins around. Larry looks at her. He starts to laugh.

EXT. (SUZANNE AND LARRY) MARETTO HOUSE - DAY

The house, from the street. We can HEAR LARRY LAUGHING.

EXT. EMMETT HOUSE - DAY

Jimmy sits in the yard. SOUND of LARRY'S LAUGHTER FADES OUT. He takes from his pocket a strip of photographs. He looks at them.

THE PHOTOGRAPHS

From the penny arcade: a strip of four photos; Suzanne and Jimmy, their faces, his nervous and confused, hers animated and flirtatious. In the last one, her hand is inside his shirt.

EXT. TATTOO PARLOR - NIGHT

Suzanne comes out of the tattoo parlor. Jimmy stands. She comes to him, takes his hand and pulls him away.

EXT. AMUSEMENT PARK - NIGHT

Jimmy follows Suzanne as they walk past the Ferris Wheel.

EXT. AMUSEMENT PARK - NIGHT

Suzanne, Jimmy following, moves down the steps from the boardwalk to the beach.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

They disappear into the darkness beneath the boardwalk.

EXT. BEACH - UNDER THE BOARDWALK - NIGHT

She turns to face him.

SUZANNE
Don't you want to see it?

JIMMY
See what?

She undoes her blouse and reveals one breast and, above it, a small tattoo of a rose. He stares at it for a long time.

SUZANNE
Well?

He looks at her.

SUZANNE
Don't you want to fuck me?

ON THE GROUND

Jimmy on top of her, struggling to get it in.

JIMMY
Wait -- I can't -- just --

SUZANNE
Here...here...

Her hand goes somewhere. They roll over. She's on top of him, moving, her hands on his chest.

HIS POV

Her face above him and her breast and the tattoo and the bottom of the boardwalk and, through the spaces between the boards, flashes of light as people walk above them.

JIMMY
Wait wait wait...Oh, Jesus...

And it's over.

INT. DATSUN - NIGHT (MOVING)

Suzanne and Jimmy. She's driving fast, concentrating on the road. He's trying to think of something to say.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The car comes to a fast stop somewhere near his house. Jimmy gets out and looks at her through the window.

SUZANNE
James. I don't know how this happened. Do you understand me?

JIMMY
Yeah.

SUZANNE
So now we have to have some rules.

JIMMY
Oh sure.

SUZANNE
My husband is a very jealous man. He can be very violent.

JIMMY
Oh.

SUZANNE
So you must never call me at home. Is that understood?

JIMMY
You bet.

SUZANNE
And James.

JIMMY
Yes, Mrs. Maretto?

SUZANNE
You can not say anything about this.

JIMMY
Course not.

SUZANNE
Ever!

JIMMY
Right.

SUZANNE
To anyone.

JIMMY
Absolutely.

SUZANNE
Do you swear to god?

JIMMY
I swear to god.

INT. TRUCK - NIGHT (MOVING)

Russell drives his father's truck on a back country road. Jimmy sits in the passenger seat.

RUSSELL
You FUCKED her?

JIMMY
Yeah.

RUSSELL
YOU FUCKED HER!

RUSSELL
I said yeah.

RUSSELL
You FUCKED MRS. MARETTO???

JIMMY
That's right. Yeah.

RUSSELL
Wait a minute. Are you tellin' me that you actually -

JIMMY
YEAH YEAH YEAH YEAH YEAH.

RUSSELL
Well what happened?

JIMMY
What do you mean?

RUSSELL
How did it -- I mean -- where -

JIMMY
It was down at the park and we were under the boardwalk and we did it and then -

RUSSELL
WAIT A MINUTE! NOT SO FAST! Did you kiss her.

JIMMY
Yeah -- I think so.

RUSSELL
Did you see her tits?

JIMMY
Sort of.

RUSSELL
Sort of <u>what</u>? Either you saw them of you didn't.

JIMMY
I saw one.

RUSSELL
Which one?

JIMMY
Uh -- the left one.

RUSSELL
What about the other one?

JIMMY
I didn't see that one.

RUSSELL
Why not?

JIMMY
Cause it happened so quick.

RUSSELL
How come? I mean - what did you say to her?

JIMMY
I didn't say nothin'.

RUSSELL
Someone must've said somethin'. What'd she say?

JIMMY
She just said -- don't you want to fuck me.

RUSSELL
"Don't you want to fuck me"?

JIMMY
Yeah.

RUSSELL
She says don't you want to fuck me?

JIMMY
Yeah.

RUSSELL
MRS. MARETTO SAYS DON'T YOU WANT TO FUCK ME?!

JIMMY
Yeah yeah yeah -- WATCH IT!

Russell jams his foot on the brakes as a deer appears in the road ahead, trapped in the headlights.

The truck swerves, its brakes squealing. There's a THUD.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Russell and Jimmy get out and move to the deer, a doe, mortally wounded, lying in the road. Its shining eyes roll with fear. Russell looks at the dent in the truck.

RUSSELL
My old man's gonna kill me.

JIMMY
It's dying.

RUSSELL
God damn it.

JIMMY
What do we do now?

RUSSELL
"What do we do now?" She dies, I get the shit beat outta me and you get to screw older married rich blonde pussy. What a fuckin' world.

The doe's head falls to the road. The light goes out of its eyes.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

Suzanne walks toward the entrance, carrying her camera. Jimmy and Russell, watch her coming. Russell has a black eye and a cut lip.

JIMMY
Hey -- Mrs. Maretto?

She stops and looks at them.

MARETTO
Oh hello, James.

JIMMY
We getting together after school or what?

MARETTO
Well I don't know. I have to -- what happened to you, Russell?

RUSSELL
I ran into something at home.

SUZANNE
Well you should be more careful.

JIMMY
Listen - there's something I need to talk to you about.

SUZANNE
Oh? What would that be?

JIMMY
Well -- I was thinking --

SUZANNE
Really? I guess we'd just better send out a news flash to the networks.

JIMMY
No -- I mean -- I had some things I need to talk to you about -- about the video and stuff.

She looks at him, letting him hang for a bit.

SUZANNE
Well. My husband is going up to some trade show in Freeport tonight so I'll be alone. Stop my the house around seven and we'll talk. OK?

She turns and starts off. Jimmy stares after her. Russell hits Jimmy on the shoulder and makes a face. Suzanne turns back.

SUZANNE
And you too, Russell, of course. And Lydia. We wouldn't want anybody to get the wrong idea, would we?

Jimmy's face falls. Mr. Finlaysson comes toward them.

SUZANNE
Hello, Mr. Finlaysson.

INT. TRAIN - NIGHT - (TWILIGHT) - MOVING

Larry and Joe sit across from each other. Larry stares out the window. Joe reads a trade magazine.

INT. (SUZANNE AND LARRY) MARETTO HOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jimmy and Lydia stand in the middle of the room. Suzanne's videocam is set up on a tripod. Walter follows Suzanne as she comes from the kitchen with a tray of drinks.

LYDIA
Oh Mrs. Maretto, it's like that house in The Young And The Restless except you've got stuff they don't even have. Like these poodle lamps. My mom would love those. She loves things that look like other things that they're not.

SUZANNE
I'll show you the rest of the house later. James, would you like to take your jacket off?

JIMMY
I don't know. Should I?

SUZANNE
Well, I think that's up to you. Now if you have to wash your hands or anything, the powder room is at the top of the stairs. Where's Russell?

JIMMY
His old man wouldn't let him come. He says he thinks what we're doing is stupid.

SUZANNE
I see. Well, we don't really need him, do we?

JIMMY
I guess we don't.

INT. TRAIN - NIGHT - MOVING

There's a pull-down table between Larry and Joe. They're playing hearts. Joe looks at him. Larry smiles and takes the trick.

INT. (SUZANNE AND LARRY) MARETTO HOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Some of the lights have been turned off. Slow rock music is playing. Suzanne is behind the videocam, a glass of wine in her hand. Jimmy and Lydia are dancing clumsily. Lydia stumbles, giggles and stops.

LYDIA
I can't do this, Mrs. Maretto.

SUZANNE
Of course you can, Liddy. Everyone can dance. You just have to let your natural sense of rhythm take over.

LYDIA
No. I don't think I have one of those. I really stink at this.

JIMMY
Yeah. She does.

SUZANNE
Look. Watch me. Watch my feet.

Suzanne moves to the music. They watch her.

LYDIA
I can't do that.

Suzanne moves behind Lydia and puts her arms around her.

SUZANNE
Just move with me. Relax your body. You're like a stick.

They move together for a few moments. Lydia gasps for air.

LYDIA
Oh I gotta sit down. It's making me feel all funny.

Lydia moves away and collapses on the couch.

SUZANNE
Come on, James.

Jimmy moves to her. She dances around him. He tries to follow, turning to face her as she winds around him, closer and closer. The music ends. Suzanne moves to the stereo. She looks at Lydia.

SUZANNE
Liddy -- would you like to do me an enormous favor?

LYDIA
Sure. What?

SUZANNE
Walter hasn't been out for hours. Would you be an angel and take him around the block?

LYDIA
Oh sure.

SUZANNE
I'm going to go up and take this sweater off. It's so warm tonight. And when you come back I'll find us something to eat and then we can continue.

LYDIA
OK.

SUZANNE
And don't let him come back until he's done his business like a good boy.

INT. TRAIN - NIGHT - MOVING

Larry and Joe are in their seats, asleep.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Lydia comes around the corner with Walter. MUSIC can be HEARD coming from the house but is sounds different somehow. Lydia unsnaps the leash from Walter's collar and he runs up the walk.

INT. (SUZANNE AND LARRY) MARETTO HOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Lydia stands in the living room. The MUSIC heard from the street is LOUDER and it's coming from upstairs. Walter has disappeared.

LYDIA
I'm back. Hello?

INT. (SUZANNE AND LARRY) MARETTO HOUSE KITCHEN - NIGHT

Lydia looks in the refrigerator.

INT. (SUZANNE AND LARRY) MARETTO HOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Lydia sits on the sofa, watching television, eating something.

INT. (SUZANNE AND LARRY) MARETTO HOUSE SECOND FLOOR - NIGHT

Lydia slowly climbs the stairs to the dimly lighted second floor.

LYDIA
(quietly)
I have to use the bathroom.

She reaches the top of the stairs, moves to the bathroom door, lookins down the hall toward the bedroom door. She moves down the hall. The bedroom door is open a crack. Lydia stands next to the door, breathing heavily. She slowly turns and looks through the crack. The MUSIC is LOUDER.

WHAT SHE SEES

Clothing on the floor and on a chair. Walter, nervously moving back and forth. The room is dark but for the faint light from a lamp with a scarf draped over it and the surging control lights on the face of the stereo. Suzanne, dressed in some of the pieces she bought at the underwear store, is dancing, swaying to the music. On the bed, in the shadows, is Jimmy, naked, staring.

Suzanne dances to the foot of the bed.

SUZANNE
Come on. Come on. Come on, little boy. Come and get it.

Lydia turns away from the door and leans against the wall.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT

The train, carrying Larry and Joe, barrels through the night.

INT. SCHOOLROOM - DAY

A class in biology. Jimmy, among the students, daydreams.

EXT. WHEATFIELD - DAY

In Jimmy's imagination. Jimmy and Suzanne thrash around, having leveled a section of wheat around them in the shape of a heart.

INT. A ROOM - SUZANNE - AS BEFORE

SUZANNE
I saw this French film once - maybe it was Italian - about an older woman who had a love affair with this teenage boy which is one of those things that apparently happens quite a lot in Europe. I thought it was kind of silly - not bacause I'm a prude or anything like that - but because I think it's a waste of time to be with somebody that you can't learn from - preferably someone who has a knowledge of one's own field of endeavor. For example there's Diane Sawyer whose ability to go from cover girl to cover story - that's my own phrase - is so remarkable - and there she is on the air every week with her partner Sam Donaldson who is - except for his hair - truly accomplished. And when she finally got married it was to this big movie director who takes time off from his busy schedule to visit her in her studio and advise her on what to wear and what kind of lighting she should have and so forth. That, to me, is what relationships are about.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

A rainy windy day. The Datsun is parked off a country road.

INT. DATSUN - DAY

Suzanne and Jimmy are sprawled in the back seat. Suzanne's face is streaked with tears.

JIMMY
What? What is it?

SUZANNE
Nothing.

JIMMY
What did I do?

She shakes her head and turns away.

JIMMY
You gotta tell me what's wrong.

SUZANNE
James -- do you think about me when we're not together?

JIMMY
All I do is think about you. It's like when I'm not with you I'm not alive. You're the only good thing that ever happened to me.

SUZANNE
I can't do this any more. I can't go home every night and have him trying to touch me and all the time I'm thinking about you - about us - and when I push him away - he has such a temper and --

JIMMY
What do you mean? Does he - ?

SUZANNE
He went crazy when he saw the tattoo. He even threatened to kill Walter. The only way I could stop him was to let him do some things I don't even want to talk about.

JIMMY
Like what?

SUZANNE
There were these women on the Sally Jesse Raphael Show the other day wearing disguises so their husbands couldn't find them and they were all living in shelters and I thought I could go and live in one of them if they'd only let me bring Walter with me -

JIMMY
Listen to me a minute -

SUZANNE
- someplace in another state where no one knows me --

JIMMY
No - listen - I know you think I'm just a kid but -

SUZANNE
James - I can't mess up your life -

JIMMY
- but listen -

SUZANNE
- and I know if he knew what was happening he'd hunt me down wherever I was - and you, too -

JIMMY
- I can take care of you - I know I can -

SUZANNE
Because he said once if he couldn't have me he wouldn't want to live -

JIMMY
Listen - I know how he feels. But I couldn't ever do anything bad to you. Or ever hurt you. A guy that does that to someone like you doesn't deserve to live. That's the truth. He doesn't deserve to live.

She looks at him.

SUZANNE
No. I suppose you're right. He doesn't.

EXT. MERTZ HOUSE PORCH - DAY - LYDIA - AS BEFORE

LYDIA
This was the most exciting time of my life. Being best friends and having secrets together and plans for a big future to look forward to. It was like living in a great movie but better because it was kind of X rated because of all the sex stuff. Mrs. Maretto used to let me drive her car even though I didn't have even a learner's permit because she said I'd have to get used to taking her around places as part of my personal assistant duties when we would be on assignment.

INT. SCHOOLROOM - DAY

A class in geography. Jimmy daydreams.

INT. THE SEA

In Jimmy's imagination. Underwater, Jimmy and Suzanne, her legs clasped around him, turn slowly. Fish swim by.

INT. DATSUN - DAY - MOVING

Somewhere outside of town. Lydia drives, clumsily. Walter is next to her. The radio blasts. Lydia keeps glancing at the rear view mirror to watch Suzanne and Jimmy in the back seat, making out.

EXT. MOTEL - DAY

A cheap joint somewhere out on the highway. The Datsun is parked. Lydia sits in the front seat with the door open, her legs outside the car. She's drinking a giant milk shake from a plastic cup. One end of Walter's leash is tied to her foot.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Sunlight leaks through the cheap blinds. The tv is tuned to a soap opera. Jimmy is on the bed. Suzanne's head is elsewhere. She looks up.

JIMMY
Please don't stop.

SUZANNE
You didn't answer my question.

JIMMY
What question was that?

SUZANNE
Did you talk to Russell?

JIMMY
Yeah. I did.

SUZANNE
And what did he say?

JIMMY
He wants a thousand dollars.

SUZANNE
Is that all?

JIMMY
He said for another five hundred he'd burn the house down.

SUZANNE
That's out of the question.

JIMMY
I think he was just being funny.

SUZANNE
I don't think that this is something to joke about.

JIMMY
And he wants your stereo.

SUZANNE
All right.

Her head disappears again.

JIMMY
And some CD's. Ohhh god --

She reappears.

SUZANNE
Did you get the gun?

JIMMY
No. Not yet. Would you please -

SUZANNE
Why not?

JIMMY
I don't know. I guess I thought you'd ask Lydia --

SUZANNE
I can't ask Liddy. You have to ask her. Don't you understand that?

JIMMY
I guess so but -

SUZANNE
Do you want me to do what I was doing?

JIMMY
Oh yeah please.

SUZANNE
Then you have to do what you have to do.

Her head disappears again.

JIMMY
Ohh yeah yeah --

She reappears.

SUZANNE
So when will it happen?

JIMMY
Oh come on please don't -

SUZANNE
I want to know when.

JIMMY
Whenever. Jesus I don't know.

She stands up and walks across the room to the bureau.

SUZANNE
Well if you don't know I guess I'll have to find somebody who does.

She starts brushing her hair in the mirror. He sits up.

JIMMY
Listen you have to understand.

SUZANNE
I think I do understand. Obviously you're not the mature person I thought you were.

JIMMY
It's just -- I never did something like that before.

SUZANNE
Yeah -- and you never made it with a twenty-five year old married woman before either. Did you?

JIMMY
No.

SUZANNE
Actually I had a thought. Maybe a better way to go on all this.

JIMMY
What's that?

SUZANNE
Russell.

JIMMY
What about him?

SUZANNE
I think Russell is enough of a man to take charge of this situation, don't you? And sometimes he looks at me in a certain way. I think he'd be very appreciative of what I could do for him. What do you think?

JIMMY
I think we could probably do it next week. Is that soon enough?

She looks at him for a moment.

SUZANNE
Really? Will you really do that for me, James?

JIMMY
Anything.

She moves back to the bed.

SUZANNE
And then we can be together and you can sleep over and we could do anything we want.

She puts her hand on his head.

JIMMY
Anything.

She pushes him back on the bed and moves over him.

INT. SCHOOLROOM - DAY

A class in astronomy. Jimmy daydreams.

INT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT - IN FLIGHT

In Jimmy's imagination. Suzanne faces the exit door, her hands on the lever that opens the door. Jimmy is behind her, his arms around her, moving. Her head swings from side to side. The door swings open and they fall out into the night sky.

EXT. NIGHT SKY

As they fall together, turning, past comets and constellations.

A BELL RINGS.

INT. SCHOOLROOM - DAY

The classroom empties, except for Jimmy, still sitting, alone.

INT. MERTZ HOUSE - NIGHT

Lydia, standing on a chair, looks for something on an upper shelf in a closet crammed with her mother's belongings.

EXT. MUD FLATS - DAY

Jimmy, Lydia and Russell squat on the sand. Lydia puts down something wrapped in cloth. They unwrap it, revealing a pistol and a box of bullets.

INT. MARETTO'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A roomful of guests cheer as Suzanne and Larry enter. A banner on the wall reads: ONE YEAR AND STILL GOING STRONG.

EXT. HINES HOME - NIGHT

Russell pushes his father's pickup down a short hill, jumps in behind the wheel and starts the engine.

INT. MARETTO'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Carol and Earl Stone congratulate Larry. Joe and Angela Maretto hug and kiss Suzanne.

EXT. EMMETT HOUSE - NIGHT

Jimmy stands in the street. The pickup appears and stops. Jimmy gets in and he and Russell put on gloves.

INT. MARETTO'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The lights dim as Angela brings a cake with one big lit candle on it to Suzanne and Larry's table. Larry smiles at Suzanne and she takes a breath and blows out the candle. GO TO BLACK.

A BRIGHT LIGHT GOES ON.

INT. TV STATION (WGSL) BROADCASTING STUDIO - NIGHT

In the light: Suzanne, dressed as in the previous scene, sits by her weather map. George stands behind the camera. The broadcast monitor shows a crawl of community events. George signals Suzanne with two fingers and she nods and straightens her script.

EXT. CAROL AND EARL STONE HOUSE - NIGHT

Carol and Earl go inside. The front lights go off.

INT. CAR - NIGHT - MOVING

Larry, driving, turns into the driveway of his house.

INT. TV STATION (WGSL) BROADCASTING STUDIO - NIGHT

George signals Suzanne with two fingers. She nods.

EXT. MARETTO'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The Maretto's neon sign goes off. Joe and Angela lock the front door and go to their car.

INT. MERTZ HOUSE KITCHEN - NIGHT

Lydia sits on the floor of the kitchen, lit by the light from the slightly open refrigerator. Her are legs drawn up against her chest. She is rocking slightly, eating something.

INT. TV STATION (WGSL) BROADCASTING STUDIO - NIGHT

George signals Suzanne with one finger.

INT. (SUZANNE AND LARRY) STONE'S HOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

It's dark. A DOOR SLAMS. Larry comes in from the kitchen, taking off his jacket. He picks up the tv remote control and turns on the tv. The tv screen shows the WGSL community events crawl. Larry moves to the dark hallway, looks up the stairs and whistles.

LARRY
Hey Walter. Let's take a walk. Come on, boy -

Something catches his eye -- part of a small overnight bag on the hallway floor. He steps to a side table and snaps on a lamp. A shadow moves. Something hits him on the back of his head. He clutches his head and falls to his knees, pulling the lamp down with him. Russell's arm goes around his throat and jerks his head back. Jimmy steps out of the shadows, a gun in his hand.

LARRY
What do you want?

RUSSELL
Don't fuckin' move.

LARRY
Just take what you want and get out OK? Here. It's a Rolex.

Larry lifts an arm, showing his watch. Russell takes the watch.

RUSSELL
I know it's a Rolex. You think it's the first time I seen a fuckin' Rolex?

LARRY
Look -- I've got some money in my -

On the living room tv screen: RAIN OR SHINE with Suzanne Stone.

RUSSELL
Shut the fuck up. Come on, Jimmy. LET'S DO THIS THING.

On the tv screen: Suzanne, starting her weather report.

SUZANNE
(on the tv)
Hi everybody -- this is Suzanne Stone in the WGSL Weather Center...

Jimmy looks over toward the tv set.

SUZANNE
(on the tv)
...and, as you probably noticed, it's been another beautiful evening with a slight chill in the air and those autumn temperatures just about where they should be...and the forecast for tomorrow is for more of the same...

LARRY
Wait now -- just wait a --

RUSSELL
Gimme the fuckin' ring.

LARRY
My ring?

RUSSELL
Yeah - take it off.

LARRY
I can't do that, man. My wife would kill me.

Jimmy looks at him.

JIMMY
She'd kill you? Suzanne would kill you?

LARRY
You know my wife?

Jimmy raises the gun and moves a step to Larry. Walter appears at the top of the stairs, barking furiously. Jimmy looks up at Walter. The light from the fallen lamp illuminates his face.

RUSSELL
NOW NOW ASSHOLE NOW!

Jimmy turns and fires. Larry crashes against the wall and slumps to the floor. They look at him. Blood is spreading on the carpet beneath his head. His eyes are still open, staring past them into the living room. Jimmy turns and looks.

SUZANNE
(on the tv)
This is Suzanne Stone saying I'll see you tomorrow, rain or shine.

Jimmy turns and looks at Larry. The light goes out of his eyes.

INT. TV STATION (WGSL) BROADCASTING STUDIO - NIGHT

Suzanne, sitting, as the tv light goes off, leaving her in the shadows, staring at the camera.

EXT. (SUZANNE AND LARRY) MARETTO HOUSE - NIGHT

PULLING BACK from the front doorway. Larry's body lies in hall, the overturned lamp nearby. PULL BACK across the front yard to the street. Walter runs in and out of the house, barking.

DISSOLVE THROUGH TO:

Some neighbors in their nightclothes and bathrobes, standing a safe distance, looking at the house. SOUND of a SIREN.

DISSLOVE THROUGH TO:

Police cars are parked in the street. Several uniformed policemen move in and out of the house. More neighbors have gathered. Two Detectives, MIKE WARDEN and BEN DELUCA get out of a car and walk toward the house.

INT. (SENIOR) MARETTO HOUSE BEDROOM - NIGHT

A PHONE RINGS and Joe comes out of the bathroom, brushing his teeth, as Angela picks up the phone.

INT. STONE HOUSE BEDROOM - NIGHT

The PHONE RINGS. Earl, in bed, reaches over and picks it up.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

Janice and her fellow skaters move into the lobby from a bus. One of the girls pokes Janice and points to a hotel man, holding out a phone toward them. Janice moves to him and takes the phone. She says hello, listens for a few moments and collapses to the floor.

INT. (SUZANNE AND LARRY) MARETTO HOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Carol, Angela and Earl sit quietly. The tv set is still on, a test pattern on the screen. A man kneels by it, carefully dusting it for fingerprints. In the hallway, Warden and DeLuca are talking quietly to Joe.

INT. (SUZANNE AND LARRY) MARETTO HOUSE BEDROOM - NIGHT

Drawers have been pulled out and overturned. Clothes are on the floor. Suzanne sits in a chair with Walter on her lap. Warden sits on the foot of the bed, facing Suzanne. DeLuca stands nearby. Their conversation is quiet and calm.

WARDEN
Mrs. Maretto, I'm Detective Mike Warden and this is my partner, Ben DeLuca. I'm really sorry to have to go over this now.

SUZANNE
That's all right. I'm sure tomorrow or the next day when this all sets in I'll be in some kind of shock but right now I want to help in any way that I can. While the trail is still warm.

WARDEN
Well, at the moment there isn't much of a trail, warm or otherwise.

SUZANNE
I'm assuming that the perpetrators - perps, isn't that what you call them - ?

WARDEN
Sometimes.

SUZANNE
- follow certain patterns of behavior that experts like yourself can recognize.

DELUCA
Well in this case there are some circumstances we're not clear on.

SUZANNE
Like what, if I may ask.

DELUCA
For one thing, there's no sign of forced entry anywhere.

SUZANNE
What if they were waiting outside and followed my husband in?

WARDEN
Uh huh. Uh - why do you say "they"?

SUZANNE
What?

WARDEN
You said "they" followed your husband in.

SUZANNE
I can't conceive of one person being able to get the jump on my husband who was a very agile man, in spite of some weight gain over the last few months.

WARDEN
I see.

SUZANNE
I just have it in my mind's eye as two or maybe even three people. I mean -- don't professional burglars work in teams, generally speaking.

WARDEN
Most professional burglars take more than just jewelry, credit cards and so forth. Like tv sets, VCR's, silverware, works of art -

SUZANNE
Maybe they were scared off by something. By Walter barking at them or something.

DELUCA
Well usually if an animal gets in the way of people like those you're talking about, they kill it.

SUZANNE
My god. That's horrible.

DELUCA
Yes, it is.

SUZANNE
Maybe I can cover some of the more obvious points.

WARDEN
What points would those be?

SUZANNE
First, Larry didn't have any enemies that I'm aware of. He was beloved by everyone.

WARDEN
Uh-huh.

SUZANNE
Secondly, our financial situation, both personal and professional, is completely secure.

WARDEN
Uh-huh.

SUZANNE
As far as I know.

WARDEN
And is there a third thing?

SUZANNE
Just that as far as our personal life is concerned, anyone can tell you what a good strong marriage we had.

WARDEN
Yes?

SUZANNE
Even though we had separate career interests we had a wonderful working partnership.

Warden gets up.

WARDEN
Well - you seem to really have thought this out.

SUZANNE
I'm a big fan of LA Law.

WARDEN
Ahhh.

SUZANNE
And Hill Street Blues.

DELUCA
What about Columbo?

SUZANNE
Oh. Well - it's very well produced but the character always looks like he just woke up. You know?

DELUCA
Ahh -- that's -

SUZANNE
I mean you'd think they'd have some kind of proper dress code in his precinct, wouldn't you?

WARDEN
Yes, you would.

EXT. (SUZANNE AND LARRY) MARETTO HOUSE - NIGHT

A tv crew is setting up. Neighbors stand around.

INT. (SUZANNE AND LARRY) MARETTO HOUSE KITCHEN - NIGHT

Carol, Faye and Angela are silently making a pot of coffee, getting cups, sugar, milk, etc.

INT. (SUZANNE AND LARRY) MARETTO HOUSE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Mike Warden watches another DETECTIVE who is kneeling on the floor, scraping something from the carpet and putting the results in a small glassine bags.

WARDEN
Anything?

DETECTIVE
Got a little dirt. Who knows? And - this --

He holds the bag up. Tiny particles catch the light.

WARDEN
What?

He takes some of the particles and rubs them between his fingers.

DETECTIVE
Don't know. Feels like pieces of shell or something.

INT. (SUZANNE AND LARRY) MARETTO HOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The Stones and Marettos are sitting, drinking coffee. Suzannem moves to the window as a strong light goes on outside.

INT. (SUZANNE AND LARRY) MARETTO HOUSE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Suzanne, carrying Walter, moves from the living room into the hall and looks out the front door.

WARDEN
You don't have to talk to those people if you don't want, Mrs. Maretto.

EXT. (SUZANNE AND LARRY) MARETTO HOUSE - NIGHT

The strong light comes from a tv news camera crew. A REPORTER is interviewing a NEIGHBOR, dressed in his bathrobe.

NEIGHBOR
Like I told the police, we heard the dog barking but that's not unusual. This is just not the kind of thing that happens in this -

Suzanne moves into the tv camera light, almost pushing the neighbor out of the way.

SUZANNE
I'm Suzanne Maretto. I think you probably want to talk to me.

The tv camera moves to Suzanne. During the following dialogue, a second camera crew and Reporter get out of a van.

SUZANNE
I just want to say that ordinarily, in this time of grief and all, I wouldn't be giving a statement but as a fellow worker in your field, I can appreciate the necessity of having a free flow of information between the working press and the public. Thank you all very much.

She moves toward the second camera crew as their light goes on.

INT. (SUZANNE AND LARRY) MARETTO HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The Marettos and the Stones are looking out the window.

INT. MERTZ HOUSE - NIGHT

Lydia and her mother, Valerie, watch Suzanne on their tv.

VALERIE MERTZ
Awful awful. Poor little thing. What will she do now?

LYDIA
Go to the Coast, maybe.

INT. WHITE ROOM - JIMMY - AS BEFORE

JIMMY
What surprised me was that he didn't put up much of a fight for a guy who had such a mean temper. When I was standing there in the hall I was trying to keep from being too nervous by thinking about Mrs. Maretto and about how we would be together for the rest of our lives in California or Florida, lying around some beach where everyone goes topless. Mrs. Maretto said we'd have to stay away from each other for a while. It's funny that I never met Mr. Maretto before that night and then, of course, he was dead, so you couldn't exactly say I got to know him.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Jimmy stands behind a tree, looking out now and then at the cemetery in the distance.

EXT. CEMETERY GRAVESITE - DAY

Winter is coming. Joe, Angela, Janice, Suzanne, Earl, Carol, Faye and their friends are present. Also Lydia and Ed Grant. Several tv news crews are set up a slight distance away. They watch Larry's coffin being lowered into the grave.

Earl Stone is holding Suzanne's hand. He looks at her.

INT. TV STUDIO - THE STONES - AS BEFORE

EARL STONE
Here's what I remember from that day. I remember how brave Susie was. She was like a little soldier, not letting herself cry, doing her best to keep the rest of us going.

INT. STONE HOUSE - DAY

Suzanne, Earl and Carol are standing in the living room, dressed as at the cemetery, getting ready to leave.

EARL
Faye, are you coming?

Faye comes down the stairs. She's wearing a striped blouse.

SUZANNE
You can't wear that blouse.

FAYE
What?

SUZANNE
The news people will be there. On tv those stripes will go all wavy. You'll look like some psychedelic nightmare. Believe me.

Faye looks at her mother and father.

EARL
Why don't you change the shirt, honey? Just take a sec, OK?

Faye turns and starts up the stairs.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

They're watching the coffin descend. Lydia is sniffling and wiping away tears.

EXT. MERTZ HOUSE PORCH - LYDIA - AS BEFORE

LYDIA
Here's what I remember from that day. That everything was so sad. It was like I was two different people and it was hard for me to keep thinking that this was the start of our brand new life.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Everyone is in a line, offering their condolences. Lydia gets to Suzanne and they embrace.

SUZANNE
Oh Liddy, it means so much to me that you came.

LYDIA
Oh, Mrs. Maretto, I wouldn't have missed it for anything. I just -

But Suzanne has already turned to embrace the next person.

SUZANNE
Oh, Mr. Delany, it means so much to me that you came.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

People are starting to leave. Janice stands by the grave.

INT. SKATING RINK - JANICE - AS BEFORE

JANICE
I have to admit that I wasn't ever what you could call enthusiastic about Suzanne. Maybe you figured that out. But you know what they say. Tragedy brings people closer together. Oh yeah? Anyway, here's what I remember about that day.

INT. (SUZANNE AND LARRY) MARETTO HOUSE HALLWAY - DAY

The family and friends are gathered in the house. Lots of food and conversation. Janice follows Suzanne up the stairs.

INT. (SUZANNE AND LARRY) MARETTO HOUSE BEDROOM - DAY

SUZANNE
I wanted to thank you for everything you've done. I know how difficult it's been for you.

JANICE
Well...

SUZANNE
I know how close you and Larry were.

JANICE
Almost like brother and sister, you might say.

Suzanne ignores this comment. She moves to the closet, opens the door and takes a jacket out.

SUZANNE
I was hoping you'd help me with Larry's things.

JANICE
Help you in what way?

SUZANNE
Well I was thinking when all this is over, I might sell the house and maybe move away somewhere.

JANICE
Where were you thinking of going?

Suzanne starts to take off her jacket. Beneath, she wears a slip.

SUZANNE
I don't know but I can't stay here. I can't live in this house with so many memories, you know?

JANICE
Oh. Sure.

SUZANNE
I thought you and I could go over -

Janice is staring at the Suzanne's tattoo.

SUZANNE
What?

INT. SKATING RINK - JANICE - AS BEFORE

JANICE
And then I knew. I don't know why exactly. But I knew. And that was the last time I saw Suzanne.

INT. TV STATION (WGSL) - ED GRANT - AS BEFORE

ED GRANT
This is what I remember about that day.

EXT. (SUZANNE AND LARRY) MARETTO HOUSE - DAY

Ed Grant is at the door, leaving. Suzanne embraces him.

SUZANNE
Oh, Ed, it means so much to me that you'd come.

ED GRANT
Well, Suzanne, I'm sure sorry about everything.

SUZANNE
I probably won't be at the station for Rain or Shine for a while.

ED GRANT
Oh, of course. We'll manage. Don't you worry about -

SUZANNE
And Ed, I'm real unhappy that I haven't been able to give you an exclusive on all that's happening.

ED GRANT
Pardon?

SUZANNE
I mean there are all these competing news markets clamoring for attention and I have to consider any future possibilities.

He tries to smile.

ED GRANT
Of course. Absolutely.

SUZANNE
I'm glad you understand.

He nods and moves off toward the street. As he goes:

ED GRANT
Fucking gangbusters.

INT. TV STATION (WGSL) - DAY - ED GRANT - AS BEFORE

ED GRANT
Of course she was all over the news programs. But I saw her in person only one other time. A couple of weeks after the funeral. She had a new suit on. She looked good.

EXT. TV STATION (WGSL) - DAY

Early morning. Ed is opening the station door.

SUZANNE'S VOICE
Ed?

She's sitting in her car in the street. He moves to her.

ED GRANT
Hello, Suzanne. How's it going?

SUZANNE
Ed, I need to collect my tapes. With all this publicity I've decided to finish my documentary and see if I can -

ED GRANT
Well we've got a slight problem there.

SUZANNE
Problem?

ED GRANT
The cops took them.

SUZANNE
What do you mean?

ED GRANT
They came and took everything away.

SUZANNE
Why would they do that?

ED GRANT
They said it was just standard proceedure.

SUZANNE
But those tapes belong to me.

ED GRANT
Well technically speaking, those tapes actually belong to us, to the station, until such time as -

Suzanne jams her foot on the accelerator and Ed jumps back and watches her drive away, tires squealing.

INT. TV STATION (WGSL) - ED GRANT - AS BEFORE

ED GRANT
I'll show you the section that piqued their interest, you might say.

He turns to the monitor and presses the remote. On the screen:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - CLASS ROOM - DAY - (TAPE)

About ten students, including Jimmy, Russell and Lydia. Mr. Finlaysson sits behind them, monitoring the discussion.

SUZANNE
We're talking today about sexually transmitted diseases and teenage attitudes toward them. Anyone want to start it off?

RUSSELL
Personally I'm against them.

SUZANNE
Maybe we can be more specific. What do you think of when I say the word AIDS?

A STUDENT
Queers.

SECOND STUDENT
Perversions.

RUSSELL
The old Hershey Highway.

MR. FINLAYSSON
Settle down, children.

SUZANNE
What about you, Liddy? Supposing you were in a sexual relationship with a fellow student. Would you expect that person to wear a condom?

LYDIA
Well. It would depend, I guess, on what kind of person they were.

RUSSELL
A blind person.

Mr. Finlaysson reaches forward and whacks Russell on the back of his head. The camera moves to Jimmy.

SUZANNE
How about you, James? Are you personally concerned about AIDS?

JIMMY
In my present situation, I mean in the relationship I got going, I don't worry about that. She's not that type of person. She's real clean.

A slight pause. Russell is staring at Suzanne, smirking. Lydia is staring at Jimmy. Mr. Finlaysson cocks his head.

JIMMY
I mean this person is so -

SUZANNE
Let's talk about warning labels on rock music and censorship in general.

INT. TV STATION (WGSL) - ED GRANT - AS BEFORE

ED GRANT
That's the piece Geraldo used. With a little editing. And it was on First Edition. And American Justice. We made a few bucks on this one and got a nice credit.

INT. (SUZANNE AND LARRY) MARETTO HOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Suzanne sits on the couch, typing letters. The tv is on with the sound down. The stereo plays rock and roll. The DOORBELL RINGS.

Suzanne gets up and goes to the door. She looks out the peephole. She closes it. She thinks for a moment, then opens the door. Lydia is outside.

SUZANNE
What do you want, Liddy?

LYDIA
Just to talk.

SUZANNE
I'm working now. What do you want to talk about?

LYDIA
About what we're gonna do.

SUZANNE
What "we"?

LYDIA
You and me and Jimmy. I'm scared.

SUZANNE
There's nothing to be scared about. You and I and Jimmy are going to stay miles away from each other. That's what we're going to do.

LYDIA
Well he's here.

SUZANNE
Here where?

LYDIA
Across the street.

SUZANNE
Jesus Christ.

She pulls Lydia inside and closes the door.

SUZANNE
Listen to me. Tell James to stay away. What's the matter with you people? Don't you ever watch Mystery Theater or anything?

LYDIA
He says he has to see you. He says he's dying of love.

SUZANNE
Tell him to call a doctor.

LYDIA
And Russell says he wants his money. And his CD's.

SUZANNE
Tell him if he doesn't keep his mouth shut, he'll be playing his goddam CD's in the gas chamber.

LYDIA
But Suzanne --

SUZANNE
What else? What do <u>you</u> want?

LYDIA
Nothing. Just to be - you know - like before. Like we were.

SUZANNE
We can't be like we were. We have to forget we ever knew each other. Don't you get it?

She opens the door and pushes Lydia out.

LYDIA
What about California and the tv show and everything?

SUZANNE
Jesus, Liddy. GET REAL.

EXT. (SUZANNE AND LARRY) MARETTO HOUSE - NIGHT

Lydia crosses the street and Jimmy steps out of the shadows and joins her and they walk away. They pass a parked car.

ANGLE ON CAR

Mike Warden is sitting in the car. He watches them go down the street. He lights a cigar.

EXT. MUD FLATS - DAY

A cold morning. Russell and his father are digging for clams. They see Warden and DeLuca walking toward them through the mist.

INT. EMMETT HOUSE - DAY

Jimmy's mother watches Warden and Deluca pat down Jimmy who stands, his hands against a wall. DeLuca finds something in one of Jimmy's pockets and hands it to Warden. He looks at it. It's one of the photos from the Playland photo booth.

EXT. MERTZ HOUSE - DAY

Lydia sits on the porch steps. Chester stands in the yard. Warden and DeLuca are on the porch. A Detective, followed by Valerie Mertz, comes out of the house, carrying the cloth wrapped pistol.

INT. STONE HOUSE - NIGHT

Earl and Carol look at their tv set whose screen shows pictures of Jimmy, handcuffed, being taken into a building by Detectives.

INT. MARETTO HOUSE - NIGHT

Joe and Angela look at their tv set whose screen shows pictures of Russell, handcuffed, escorted by Detectives. Russell makes a face and kicks out at the camera, hitting it, and the Detectives wrestle him away.

INT. A ROOM - SUZANNE - AS BEFORE

SUZANNE
As you can imagine, I was shocked beyond comprehension. To think that these disadvantaged youngsters who I had taken under my wing and spent my time with and who would only stand to ultimately benefit from my media savvy -- to think that they might be responsible for this gruesome crime simply boggles one with disbelief. Of course I

SUZANNE (CONT)
realized - and I hope this doesn't sound callous - that the upside to all this was that, assuming that justice prevailed, I would have in my documentary an extremely marketable commodity. I think something that even PBS would take an interest in which, of course, would mean a smaller audience but a much larger prestige factor.

INT. POLICE STATION CORRIDOR - DAY

Detectives escort Jimmy down a hall. They pass a bench on which Russell and his father are sitting. Russell is handcuffed to the bench. As Jimmy passes, he looks at Russell. Russell shrugs.

INT. POLICE STATION INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Warden sits, facing Jimmy. DeLuca activates a tape recorder.

WARDEN
Want to tell me about it?

JIMMY
I got nothin' to tell.

WARDEN
Your friend Russell told us plenty.

JIMMY
Like what?

DELUCA
He said your dick was bigger than your brain.

JIMMY
Oh yeah? He really said that?

WARDEN
I don't think he meant it as a compliment. Want to tell me about Mrs. Maretto?

JIMMY
What about her?

DELUCA
About when you started banging her.

JIMMY
Nothing happened like that.

WARDEN
Was underneath the boardwalk the first time? After she got the tattoo? I guess in her car was later, huh? And in the motel.

DELUCA
What about in her bed? In her and her dead husband's bed.

JIMMY
He threatened to kill her.

Warden shakes his head.

WARDEN
Fucking amateurs.

JIMMY
Who?

WARDEN
Listen, son, as career criminals you guys flunk out of kintergarden. Your prints are on the gun. Your pal left a trail of clam shells all over the murder scene. There's blood on those shoes you wore. And so forth. You boys did everything but leave a business card.

JIMMY
He used to beat her all the time.

WARDEN
Sure he did.

Warden looks at Jimmy for a bit. DeLuca turns the tape recorder off. Warden gets up.

WARDEN
Think about it a while, Jimmy. Will you do that?

He starts to go out.

JIMMY
We were going to California.

Warden turns back.

JIMMY
She said I had real potential in her field. In tv.

DeLuca turns the tape recorder on.

WARDEN
Oh? Doing what?

JIMMY
Sports. Like being a sports announcer. I wouldn't mind that.

INT. MERTZ HOUSE - DAY

Warden, DeLuca and two other Detectives are putting a wire on Lydia. She's crying. Warden hands her the telephone. Lydia does her best to get control of herself as she dials.

LYDIA
(into phone)
Suzanne?

EXT. SHOPPING MALL - DAY

Suzanne is walking toward us from a distance. She gets to us and stops. She smiles her warmest smile.

SUZANNE
Hi, Liddy.

She takes a little box from her purse and opens it.

SUZANNE
Remember these little gold earrings that you liked? I thought they'd look real nice on you.

Lydia takes them and looks at them.

LYDIA
Oh they're gorgeous.

They sit on the bench. Suzanne helps her put the earrings on.

SUZANNE
Is it my imagination or is that diet working? Have you lost a few pounds?

LYDIA
Maybe. I haven't been eating so much the last few days.

SUZANNE
So what's this about talking to the police?

LYDIA
I just figured that Russell would tell them everything and it might be better if we did too so at least -

SUZANNE
Look -- no one is going to believe anything Russell and Jimmy say. They're just a couple of punks. They wouldn't be in this deep shit if they'd kept their mouths shut. There's no evidence that we were involved. I wasn't anywhere near the house. And if they did find out anything, you know who'd be in trouble. You would.

LYDIA
What do you mean?

SUZANNE
Well Liddy -- if you hadn't gone and gotten your mother's gun, Larry would still be alive, wouldn't he?

LYDIA
Yeah - but you asked me about the gun.

SUZANNE
No, I didn't. Jimmy did. Don't you remember?

LYDIA
But you asked Jimmy to do it and you told Russell you'd pay him -

SUZANNE
No. I don't think so. I never gave Russell any money. You know that. And the way I remember it was your plan all along. You and Jimmy who had this crazy fixation about me and you were getting some kind of perverted kick out of the whole idea like people with your sexual problems tend to do -

LYDIA
But Suzanne -

SUZANNE
- and Russell went along with you because basically he's an evil little scumbag that I'll bet you were having some kind of sick sex with in spite of your Lesbian tendencies -

LYDIA
Wait a minute, please -

SUZANNE
Wait for what?

Lydia's starting to cry.

LYDIA
I thought we were friends.

SUZANNE
Well OK then -- take some advice from a friend. Keep your fucking mouth shut. It's their word against mine. And who are they? A bunch of sixteen year old losers who grew up in shacks and whose parents sit around drinking and screwing their cousins. I'm a professional person, for Christ's sake. Who do you think a jury would believe?

Suzanne gets up and walks away. Passersby look at Lydia crying.

INT. (SUZANNE AND LARRY) MARETTO HOUSE - DAY

Suzanne answers the front door. She's wearing leotards and a Jane Fonda exercize tape is playing on the living room tv. Warden and DeLuca stand outside.

WARDEN
Hello, Suzanne.

INT. TV STUDIO STAGE - STONES AND MARETTOS - AS BEFORE

EARL
I must say - when they brought Suzanne down and booked her she handled herself with enormous - what - ?

CAROL
Dignity.

EARL
Precisely. Dignity. Great presence. Talking to the press and posing for pictures. But seeing your own child in handcuffs -- which were really absurd on those delicate little wrists -- I tell you there's nothing quite so devastating.

JOE
(quietly)
Yes there is.

EARL
That tape the police made was very disturbing for us to listen to with its language and all although I think it's clear that Susie was under an enormous psychological strain what with those kids trying to blackmail but, as our lawyer said: we still have legal proceedures in this country -

EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

Suzanne, Earl and Carol with their LAWYER, face the press.

LAWYER
(overlapping Earl's dialog)
- in this country and the Court has very wisely ruled that this is a clear case of police entrapment and the tape is disallowed in court and consequently Mrs. Maretto has been granted bail in the amount of two hundred thousand dollars which we thought was a bit steep but at least she will be free to assist us in preparing her defense. Thank you.

The press and tv people call Suzanne's name. Suzanne moves toward them until she is virtually surrounded by cameras.

SUZANNE
I just want to say it's nice to live in a country where life liberty and all the rest of it still stand for something.

A REPORTER
What are you going to do now, Mrs. Maretto?

SUZANNE
I'm going to go home and walk my dog. Thank you.

Earl and her lawyer try to guide her away.

A REPORTER
Mrs. Maretto -- how are you going to answer the charges?

A SECOND REPORTER
Will you take the stand in your own defense?

A THIRD REPORTER
Hey Suzanne -- did you get those kids to kill your husband?

She turns back. The lawyer tries to hold her but she pulls away.

SUZANNE
I loved Larry Maretto very much. But the fact is that my husband had a serious cocaine problem which, of course, accounted for his violent temper. It's something he and I had been dealing with in the past few months. I believe that while I was making my documentary - Teens Speak Out - James and Russell got to know my husband unbeknownst to me - and got him hooked and became his main suppliers.

INT. MARETTO'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Joe, Angela and Janice, alone in the restaurant, sit at a table and watch Suzanne's statement on the evening news.

SUZANNE
(on the tv)
And when I finally confronted him, he confessed and we spent a truly heart-rending night with him crying in my arms while I pledged my support and love. And it was at that time - and I might add that in

SUZANNE (CONT)
I vowed to use all the power that I might have as a journalist to educate the public about this terrible epidemic of drug abuse in America today.

Joe, staring at the tv set, gets up and moves toward the bar.

SUZANNE
(on the tv)
I believe that when he tried to break free of them or maybe told them he was thinking about turning them in to the law they killed him. I had no intention of revealing this dark side of my late husband's character because of my affection for his parents but now that he's passed away I feel it's right that I use the truth to defend myself. And if my story can help one other couple to avoid these kind of tragic pitfalls then I feel it has all served some higher purpose.

Joe goes berserk and starts smashing everything on and behind the bar. Janice sits at a table, watching. Angela tries to stop him for a moment and then gives up and sits down with Janice. It goes until Joe's rage exhausts him. He leans against the bar.

SUZANNE
(on the tv)
There were times in these past few tragic weeks when I wished I had died that night along with Larry.

Joe lifts his finger and points at Suzanne's image.

SUZANNE
(on the tv)
I really mean that. But I'm a fighter. And I know that some day - when my fight is over - I'll be joining my husband in the heaven that he so fervently believed in. Thank you.

Joe turns away from the set and looks at Angela and Janice. They stare at each other as though caught suddenly by some common understanding.

INT. TV STUDIO - MARETTOS AND STONES - AS BEFORE

EARL
And that was the last time we -

CAROL
The last time we saw her.

INT. A ROOM - SUZANNE - AS BEFORE

SUZANNE
Which pretty well brings us up to date. Until your phone call. And I must say that it wasn't entirely unexpected since in the last few days a number of interesting offers for my story have been literally pouring in from the networks and some major movie studios. I totally understand why we'll be keeping this meeting confidential until such time as we may come to a mutually beneficial agreement. And I have to admit that I really enjoy the spy story aspect of our first rendez-vous, if I may call it that, because I feel that being a good investigative reporter is very much like being a kind of secret agent. I hope you enjoy viewing this document which, I believe, could serve as the kind of first draft that you Hollywood people are so richly rewarded for. Well. I guess that's a wrap.

INT. (SUZANNE AND LARRY) MARETTO HOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

It is now REVEALED that the taping has been taking place in a corner of the living room. Suzanne removes the tape from the videocam and puts it in her purse. She picks up her coat.

INT. (SUZANNE AND LARRY) MARETTO HOUSE HALLWAY - NIGHT

SUZANNE
Walter. Come on, baby.

He runs to her and she picks him up and moves to the front door.

EXT. (SUZANNE AND LARRY) MARETTO HOUSE - NIGHT

As Suzanne steps out, carrying Walter. It's starting to snow.

INT. DATSUN - NIGHT - MOVING

Suzanne drives, Walter at her side. The radio plays.

EXT. STREETS - NIGHT

The Datsun moves along almost empty streets.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

The Datsun moves down a road outside of town.

EXT. ANOTHER ROAD - NIGHT

Near a lake, frozen over. A small country bridge spans a narrow section of the lake. The Datsun moves onto a bridge. There's a car parked on the far side of the bridge. The Datsun moves over the bridge and near the car. A man gets out of the car and moves toward the Datsun. Suzanne peers out at him. He has an expensive overcoat on. He is very handsome and full of smiles.

MAN
Suzanne?

SUZANNE
Yes.

MAN
Finally.

SUZANNE
Shall I get out?

MAN
Why not?

She opens the door and steps out, carrying Walter. The Man grasps her mittened hand in both his patent leather gloved hands.

MAN
The famous Suzanne Maretto. How nice to meet you.

SUZANNE
Thank you. Did you come all the way from -

MAN
I came a long distance to see you. And who is this?

SUZANNE
This is Walter.

MAN
Well, hello, Walter.

SUZANNE
I don't know why but I thought you would be older. Running a big studio and everything.

MAN
I am older.

He laughs charmingly. She laughs with him. He smiles and stares into her eyes. He's so handsome.

MAN
Ahh. Come with me for a moment.

He starts to pull her away.

SUZANNE
Where are we -

MAN
To show you.

SUZANNE
What?

He's pulling her down the slight incline at the side of the bridge toward the lake.

MAN
It has to do with your story. It's so funny.

He laughs and she laughs with him and allows herself to be led out of sight under the bridge. HOLD ON THIS as the laughter continues and then stops and then we hear WALTER BARKING and:

SUZANNE'S VOICE
I don't see -- wait -- WAIT -- WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO -- NO NO -- WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS -- OH GOD STOP NOOOOO FOR JESUS SAKE ARE YOU CRAZY DON'T DO THIS YOU FUCKING -

After a while the man comes back up the incline to his car. He is carrying Walter and Suzanne's coat. As he comes into the light we can see that he is not so handsome, not handsome at all, almost a different man. He throws Suzanne's coat down on the bridge near her car. He carries Walter to his car, gets in and drives away. The snow falls heavily.

ANGLE ON THE ICE

Suzanne's body turns as it drifts under the ice.

INT. MAN'S CAR - NIGHT (MOVING)

The man takes off his wet gloves as he drives. Walter watches nervously as the man punches out a number on his car phone.

INT. MARETTO HOUSE BEDROOM - NIGHT

The PHONE RINGS. Joe, in bed beside Angela, answers it.

JOE
Hello...Yes...OK...Thank you. Thank you very much.

He hangs up. Angela looks at him. He puts his head down.

EXT. THE LAKE - DAWN

Some cops are out on the ice, hacking away with implements. Warden stands on the bridge, watching. DeLuca brings Suzanne's purse from the Datsun and hands it to Warden.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

A hundred reporters scramble across the snow covered field to get to the gravesite where Suzanne is being buried with her family and not many others in attandance.

INT. MIKE WARDEN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Warden and DeLuca watch Suzanne's tape on a tv monitor.

SUZANNE
(on the tv)
I hope you enjoy viewing this document which, I believe, could serve as the kind of first draft that you Hollywood people are so richly rewarded for. Well. I guess that's a wrap.

Warden withdraws the tape and looks at DeLuca.

DELUCA
What do you think happened to the mutt?

WARDEN
I think he's maybe a thousand miles away.

DELUCA
Yeah. Eating lasagna for dinner.

WARDEN
They're real nice people, the Marettos.

DELUCA
I was thinking that.

WARDEN
He was a good kid, their boy.

DELUCA
That's what everyone says.

They look at each other for a moment. Warden opens s drawer in his desk and takes out a hammer.

WARDEN
Fuck it.

Deluca watches Warden put the tape down and smash it to bits.

INT. TV STUDIO STAGE - STONES AND MARETTOS - AS BEFORE

EARL STONE
You know, the problem was Suzanne believed in a perfect world. One little fault and she would just -

CAROL STONE
Panic.

EARL
Yes. That's it. And I think that's what happened. All those terrible rumors and gossip. She couldn't take it any more and she just panicked. Not like her sister. Faye here is steady as she goes. But she's always going to miss her little sister, aren't you, sweetheart?

FAYE
Oh yes. Always.

INT. (SUZANNE AND LARRY) MARETTO HOUSE HALLWAY - DAY

Faye, dressed as at Suzanne's funeral, climbs the stairs.

INT. (SUZANNE AND LARRY) MARETTO HOUSE BEDROOM - DAY

Faye takes underwear, jewelry, scarves from Suzanne's bureau and puts them in a suitcase on the bed. She goes back and feels around the drawers to make sure they're empty. She stops. She withdraws her hand. She opens it slowly. The locket, given to her twenty years ago by her grandmother, is in it.

INT. WHITE ROOM - JIMMY - AS BEFORE

JIMMY
I'm going to be here every day for life plus thirty years. If I live that long. Russell copped a plea and got sixteen years but it didn't matter much cause the second week he was here he got killed when he tried to stop some guy from doing sodomy on him. Isn't that a bitch? I miss him. He was a good pal. And Lydia, too. She was OK. But mostly Mrs. Maretto. And the weird thing is I have trouble now remembering what she looked like. Except when I dream about her which I do every night. I dream I'm at a baseball game and I'm in the broadcasting booth way above the field and I'm calling the plays and she's sitting right next to me, feeling me up. I can't hardly wait to get to sleep.

INT. TV STUDIO STAGE - STONES AND MARETTOS - AS BEFORE

EARL
This is - what - the sixth or seventh talk show we've done together.

JOE
Seven.

EARL
People recognize us on the streets now. It's peculiar.

JOE
It certainly is.

EARL
You might say our two families are sort of bound together by these tragedies. Isn't that so?

JOE
That's right. Bound together.

A LIGHT FLASHES. SOUND of an audience APPLAUDING.

EXT. MERTZ HOUSE PORCH - LYDIA - AS BEFORE

LYDIA
Suzanne used to say that you aren't really anybody in America if you're not on tv. Cause what's the point of doing anything worthwhile if nobody's watching. And when people are watching it makes you a better person. So if everybody was on tv all the time, then everybody would be better people. But then if everybody was on tv all the time there'd be nobody left to watch. Here's where I get confused. But they're flying me to go on Oprah next Friday and I hope she's going to give me some diet tips. And Phil Donahue called but I'm a little nervous about that one cause I honestly can't follow what he says most of the time. And some others I can't remember offhand. It's really something when you think that I'm the one who's going to be famous. Suzanne would die if she knew.

MAN'S VOICE
End sticks.

A film crew girl steps into frame with the sticks.

GIRL
End sticks.

She hits the sticks. The lens shuts down.

CLOSEUP - JANICE MARETTO - DAY

Janice stands, waiting, then glides away on her skates. REVEAL she is skating across the lake. She skates away until she finds the place where we saw Suzanne's body under the ice. Janice skates a circle around it. Then she speeds away and speeds back, slashing at the circled area with her skates. She goes back and forth as though she's erasing the spot. Then she skates off across the lake until we can't see her any more.

THE END